



Aphodius beetles

Aphodius granarius

Order Coleoptera, Family Scarabidae; scarab beetles

Introduced pest

Pest information: Turfgrasses, root-feeding grubs; adults consume soil high in organic matter.

Photo not available, but larvae and adults resemble black turfgrass *ataenius*.

Description: This is a small, black scarab beetle around 6 mm in length that is common around high maintenance golf courses, especially highly irrigated and fertilized areas. *Aphodius* beetles primarily feed on decaying organic matter, particularly compost and manure, but also damage turf roots. This European scarab commonly is found feeding with black turfgrass *Ataenius* in areas with high organic material. It is also commonly found in dung.

Life history: Adults overwinter in woodlots and start to fly in May to June to deposit eggs in the thatch. Grubs feed and develop over two months, with peak damage in July and early August. Most root injury occurs near the soil-thatch interface. Grubs pupate in the soil. Adults start emerging in August. There can be two generations a year.

Overwintering: Adults in woodlots.

Damage symptoms: The roots of the grass are severed, so blades pull easily.

Monitoring: High levels of infestation of this pest can be tolerated. Control measures are indicated when there are greater than 50 grubs/sq. ft. Look for brown patches of turf that pull easily. Identify a grub problem by examining a square foot sample of lawn along the border where dead or damaged grass meet healthy grass. When grub densities are high, the blades pull away from the roots, and the turf rolls back like a carpet. Skunks and moles use grubs for food. Mostly a pest of northern golf courses and lawns spread with manure.

Cultural control: Maintain healthy grass by fertilizing in the spring and fall and watering during periods of drought.

Chemical control: Do not use broad spectrum insecticides routinely, as they will do more harm than good by killing the beneficial insects that live in the turf. This can cause pest outbreaks. Use insecticides in June and July.

Biological control: Carabid ground beetles, staphylinid rove beetles, ants, spiders.

Plant mortality risk: High, if threshold is reached.

Biorational pesticides: halofenozide

Conventional pesticides: carbaryl