

Japanese Beetle (*Popillia japonica* Newman)

The Japanese beetle is a highly destructive plant pest of foreign origin. Feeding on grass roots, it damages lawns, golf courses, and pastures. Adult beetles attack foliage, flowers, and fruits of more than 300 species of ornamental and agricultural plants!

The Japanese beetle was first found in the United States in 1916 in southern New Jersey. Since then, it has spread throughout most of the country east of the Mississippi River, as well as areas in Arkansas, Iowa, and Missouri.

How To Recognize the Japanese Beetle's Life Stages

The adult Japanese beetle is a little less than 1/2 inch long and has a shiny, metallic-green body with bronze-colored outer wings. The beetle has five small tufts of white hair along each side and two tufts of white hair in the back of its body, under the edges of its wings. Males usually are slightly smaller than females. Adults can be seen in late spring or early summer aboveground.

During the feeding period, females intermittently leave plants, burrow about 3 inches into the ground—usually into turf—and lay a few eggs. This cycle repeats until the female has laid 40–60 eggs.

By midsummer, the eggs hatch, and the young larvae begin to feed on grass roots. These grubs grow to about an inch long and lie in a curled position. In late autumn, the grubs burrow 4–8 inches into the soil and remain inactive all winter. This insect spends about 10 months a year in the ground in the larval stage.



The adult Japanese beetle lives above-ground for about 2 summer months and spends about 10 months underground.



Japanese beetle larva underground.





The Japanese beetle life cycle. (Illustrated by APHIS employee Joel Floyd.)

In early spring, the grubs return to the turf and continue to feed on roots until late spring, when they change into pupae. In about 2 weeks, the pupae become adult beetles and emerge from the ground. This life cycle takes a year.

For more information, go to http://www.aphis.usda.gov/plant_health/plant_pest_info/jb/index.shtml.

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