



PESTS & DISEASES

African Black Beetle

The African black beetle is usually discovered at the larval stage in its lifecycle. The larvae are predominantly white with a brown head and a black, swollen abdomen. Mature larvae are around 30mm long and beetles can grow to 12mm long. Populations are generally found in lawns, garden beds and pots.

Adult beetles mate in spring and eggs are laid in soft soil. As the soil-dwelling larvae mature over the warmer months, they feed on the roots of lawn or other garden plants until they emerge as adults and begin to forage both above and below ground.

Damage is usually recognisable as dead patches in the lawn or an area of the garden or a pot where seedlings keep dying.

The dead or poorly plants are easy to pull up due to the roots being depleted. Before applying control methods, be aware that damage attributed to African black beetles can have a similar appearance to some fungal diseases, watering issues, soil and lawn compaction and annual lawn weeds that have died, leaving brown patches behind.

Control Methods

- Dig the soil and dispose of any larvae found.
- Fork over soil to expose the larvae to birds (do not do this if you have applied chemicals).
- Granular or soluble insecticides can be sprinkled onto the lawn and garden beds. Chemical treatment is best carried out in spring or summer when the larvae are young and near the surface.
- The best method for vegetable patches is to dig them out. Chemicals from insecticides can transfer into the soil and edible crops.