

# The Fight to Keep Your Lawn Green

BY NATALIE LERNER

**D**arn moths! Seriously, have you guys had any bouts with lawn moths? I have learned firsthand about these guys, better known as Sod Webworms, and let me tell you, they are not fun if you are trying to take care of a lawn. The larvae stage is where they cause damage. In adult stage, they are harmless.

The larvae spend the winter in underground tunnels, and by spring they pupate. 10-14 days later an adult moth emerges. After mating, female moths can lay up to 200 eggs. The hatched larvae feed on your lawn in as little as seven days, and usually in the months from June to September. If you find more than six larvae in a square foot, you have a problem that needs to be resolved, because big brown patches are about to take over your beautiful green space.

Using a granular or liquid insecticide will help get rid of these larvae within 30 days. Granular insecticides need to be watered in to start working, as they get absorbed into the plant tissue the bugs are feeding on.

According to my research, insects or disease are one of the top four reasons your lawn might be fading. Improper watering and/or mowing, as well as foot traffic stress could be other factors.

For a quick cheat sheet on how to circumvent these issues and to keep your grass green and alive through the summer, refer to what I have discovered below:

## 1. Water with intention.

- Soaking your grass during dry spells, three to four times per week, will help saturate the root zone.
- Watering in the morning between six and 10am to avoid rapid evaporation.
- Directing the water at your lawn and not at sidewalks and driveways prevents water wasting.



- Remaining flexible with watering schedules and shutting off automatic sprinklers when the rain comes will skirt oversaturation.
  - Avoiding the use of hot water will help you not to scorch your grass.
2. **Keep your grass no shorter than 3-3.5 inches.**
  3. **Feed your lawn so nutrients are replenished.**
  4. **Remove weeds so grass roots have space.**
  5. **Use a garden fork to aerate your lawn so it can breathe and absorb water better.**
  6. **Overseed grass in the fall so it is thick and can withstand stress later in the year.**
  7. **Try a new variety of grass if your grass has not recovered.**

There may be more ways than one to handle any of the issues your lawn might be experiencing. Your best bet would be to contact a lawncare specialist to get to the core of your issue. Following the pointers above seem to be the general consensus among lawncare gurus though. Personally, my lawn has shown great improvement since we started practicing these things. We haven't seen those pesky little Sod Webworms for over a year, and the massive brown spot is gone. What was

once a fight is now a victory. Simple habits have been put into place and lawncare is now a much more peaceful and simple practice.

May you never have to experience the wrath of a Sod Webworm. Rather, may you have a lush green yard make it through the summer and all year long!

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