

In the Garden

Big Bugs

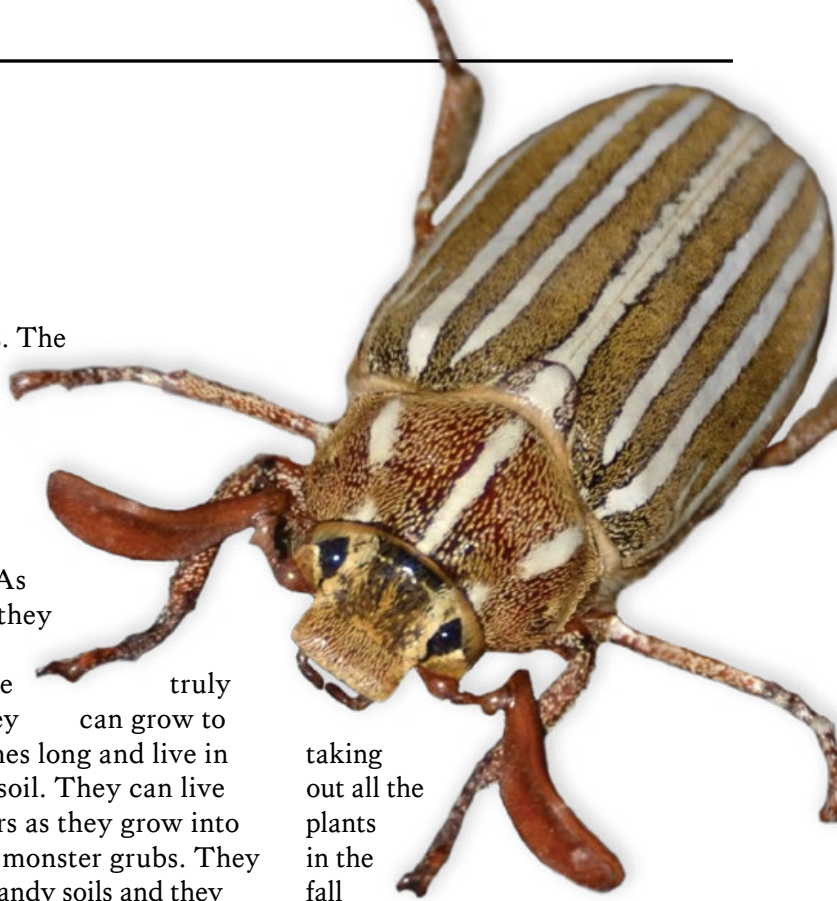
I was talking to a friend lately and she said “What are those huge ugly grubs we dug out of the garden?” Huge? Ugly? That sounds impressively cool and right up my alley. After checking and a bit of Googling, we found out they are the larva of ten lined June Beetles.

Adult June Beetles are so much fun to watch. They are barely able to fly and are really slow. They usually crash into the sides of buildings and are attracted to lights at night. The dragonflies love to gobble them up. The usual evidence of June beetles are the outer wing covers. They are all that remains after someone has made a meal out of Mr. June Beetle. The covers are very stripy and usually black white and brown coloured.

The best part of June beetle viewing (beyond watching the clumsy flying) is the fact that if you pick them up they hiss at you. This is enough to distract most



cats and dogs. The males have enormous antennae that are used to pick up the scent of the females. As much fun as they are to watch, their larva are horrible. They can grow to almost 2 inches long and live in your garden soil. They can live there for years as they grow into these creepy monster grubs. They seem to like sandy soils and they really enjoy destroying the roots of plants. This year they murdered my lovely pink Oriental poppy. I noticed that it failed to leaf out in spring and dug it up. The root had been completely chewed off. That was a big poppy and finding something good to replace it has left a hole in my garden. Anything I grow there is going to be similarly chomped so I resigned myself to



taking out all the plants in the fall and sieving out the soil. I usually pitch the grubs into my neighbour’s garden, but after watching a grub march slowly back to the bed, I think the grubs will be taking a “trip to Langford.”

To avoid the damage caused by June beetle, add compost to the soil and try to reduce the amount of sand. Actually, I think that could be the solution to almost every garden problem- just add compost!

Mill Bay garden Club is taking it’s summer rest but will be back on 24 September at 6:45 pm at the Mill Bay Hall.



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