

# Earthly Elements

“Helpful Information From The Trenches”

Issue 1

Spring Edition

March 2005

## Ahhhhh...Springtime

Yes, & here's looking forward to another gardening season.

This issue contains information that's both fun as well as informative, and it's my hope that you and your family will gain some useful/helpful tips. "Plant Thyself" helps you let the flowers do the work while you enjoy the blooms year after year. On page 2, you'll learn what flowers say and why they guarantee smiles. For veggie gardeners, "Guide to Greens" helps

you to distinguish differences in tastes and what to serve them with to accentuate their flavors. The longest article is all about those nasty lawn menaces "Grubs", and what you can do to combat them. Knowing the enemy is half the battle.

## Plant Thyself!

### The Best Annual Self Seeders

Creating a flower garden takes time, so consider letting the plants do the work for you. Planting flowers that easily self seed each year will not only cut your gardening time down but reward you with a tapestry of summer color. Here's a list of annuals to try:

- |                    |               |
|--------------------|---------------|
| Amaranthus         | Morning glory |
| Bachelor's Buttons | Pansy         |
| Coreopsis          | Snapdragon    |
| Cosmos             | Sunflower     |
| Love-in-a-mist     | Sweet alyssum |
| Marigold           | Zinnia        |

All these annuals need to put on their show is full sun and moist, well drained soil. Also, for best results, allow the soil to remain bare (free of mulch). While doing this may require you to do a bit more weeding, it will encourage the seeds to sow themselves freely for next year's garden.

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## Flowers Guarantee Smiles!

A behavioral study done at Rutgers University scientifically proved that flowers increase happiness and enhance good moods. The study specifically showed:



### Flowers have an immediate impact on happiness

People experience extraordinary delight and gratitude upon receiving them



### Flowers have a long-term positive effect on moods

People feel less depressed, anxious and agitated around flowers, resulting in a higher sense of life enjoyment



### Flowers make loving connections

The presence of flowers leads to increased contact with family, friends and intimate partners



### Flowers encourage sharing

People display arrangements in areas open to visitors—foyers, living rooms, kitchens and dining rooms



In Joy or Sadness,  
Flowers are our  
Constant Friends

*Kokuzo Okakura*



## Flower Talk



A petal or leaf can be worth a few choice words when speaking the language of flowers and herbs.

**Basil**—love, good wishes or dislike

**Chamomile**—wisdom, fortitude

**Chives**—usefulness

**Dill**—good cheer

**Scented Geranium**—happiness

**Lavender**—devotion

**Lemon Balm**—sympathy, regeneration

**Mint**—refreshment, virtue

**Parsley**—merriment, festivity

**Rosebuds**—love, beauty, success

**Sage**—long life, wisdom

**Thyme**—daring, courage

**Violet**—modesty, devotion



## Guide to Greens

Fresh greens from your garden are a welcome addition to spring meals. Choose seasonings that complement rather than mask the flavor of greens. Here are some suggestions:

### BITTER GREENS

Chicory, dandelion, radicchio escarole, endive. Season with garlic, olive oil, and bold vinegars. Pair with citrus fruit, hard-boiled eggs, aged hard cheeses, and sweet, salty, or smoky meats, fish, and cheeses.

### SWEET LETTUCES AND GREENS

Pea shoots, sunflower shoots, red and green butterhead, red and green romaine,

and green loose leaf lettuce, oak leaf, mache. Season with fresh herbs, light oils, and sweet and light vinegars. Pair with mild cheeses, shallots, and fruit.

### SPICY GREENS

Mustard, cress, sorrel, turnip greens. Season with bold oils, garlic, curry powder, minty herbs and bold spices such as cumin, rosemary, basil, and chile. Pair with cooked onions and smoky meats, fish, and cheeses.

### STURDY GREENS

Arugula, spinach, beet greens, chard, kale, baby bok choy. Season with garlic, chile, herbs, and bold oils. Pair with butter, cream sauces, cheese, citrus fruits, and smokey meats and fish.



## Grubs...

### *Those Nasty Grassroot Invaders*

Lawn grubs are the major pest of turfs in Michigan. Knowing the enemy is half the battle in winning the war against it.

#### Description

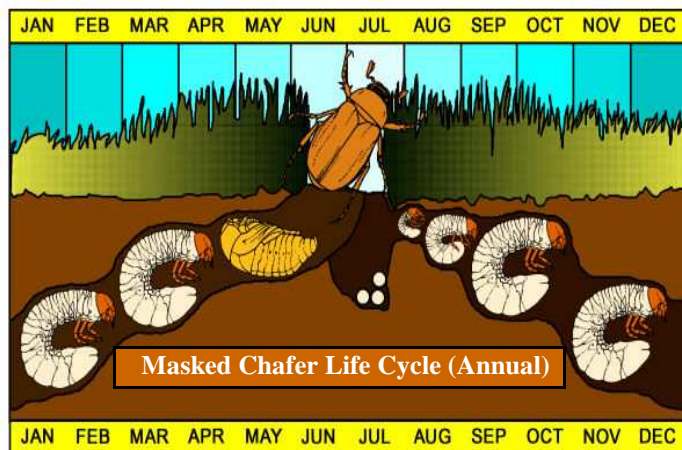
What is a grub anyway? They're forms of various destructive beetles including June bugs, Japanese beetles, scarab beetles, and

chafers. They damage lawns (typically, August to October) and some garden plants by feeding on the roots weakening the turf (or plant) so that it turns brown and dies. Grubs are white in color, with a characteristic "C" shape body.



#### Life Cycle

Below is a monthly chart of the growth cycle and the various stages grubs go through. The true white grub for example, (May/June beetle) typically has a three-year life cycle, while annual white grubs (Japanese beetle, masked chafer or other species) complete one generation each year. Adult beetles will lay eggs in mid-summer (July/August), primarily on well-watered lawns in full sun, or often near pavement. Once the grubs emerge and become active you can see Japanese beetles flying during the day and annual white grub beetles (masked chafer) flying just after sundown.



#### Correct Diagnosis

If you see patches of dead grass, or notice lawn damage by birds, raccoons, skunks, or moles (all of which feed on grubs), **you**

**MAY** have a grub problem. Dead patches without animal damage could be due to problems such as drought, poor soil, diseases, etc. As with **ANY** pest problem, **MAKE SURE** and don't treat for grubs that aren't there! Skunks and raccoons may tear up lawns in search of grubs, even when grub numbers are relatively low! Typically, a population of 8 to 12 grubs per square foot causes lawn damage that requires control; whereas lower populations may not damage the grass, but may still attract skunks, raccoons or moles. Be sure to **CHECK** a suspected area **first** by digging up a patch (about an inch or so deep). If you find a few grubs per square foot, you're probably okay, however, should you find more **you'll need to take action**.

#### Correct Treatment

Lawns showing damage from grubs can be treated organically or with an insecticides. Insecticides available for homeowners include Diazinon (liquid or granular); Dylox (granular); Bendiocarb (Intercept); Grub-B-Gon; (Imidacloprid) or (Merit, formerly GrubEx). Organic methods, such as beneficial nematodes, neem oil or milky spore are also available. With the milky spore, it takes several seasons for the spores to build up to a point of effectiveness. Spraying with neem oil is effective in several ways. It suppresses their desire to feed, disrupts beetles' ability to grow and reproduce, and can act as a repellent.

Whatever method you choose, **READ AND FOLLOW ALL LABEL INSTRUCTIONS** before applying. If using a granular treatment, water insecticide into the soil **immediately**. Apply treatment in July to lawns that are irrigated, as spring applications

aren't helpful because the grubs only feed for a short time. In addition, turfgrasses are actively growing at that time so they don't show damage.



## Gardener Gatherings

Places to Go & Things to Learn

**What & Where**

**Matthaei Botanical Gardens**  
**Spring Plant Sale**  
**April 30, May 1 & 2**  
call **734-998-7061** for directions & detail

**Novi Spring Perennial Exchange**  
**May 21 10:00 AM 2:00 PM**  
Old Township Hall  
10 mile Rd. E. of Taft  
call **248-347-0400** for more info

**Detroit News**  
**Spring Perennial Exchange**  
**May 21th 9:00 AM 11:00 PM**  
In the Detroit News parking lot  
next to MGM Grand Casino  
call **313-222-2492** for  
directions & details

Contact us at 734-416-0866 or earthenjoy@att.net

