

Eradicating Japanese Beetles from Idaho



IDAHO STATE
DEPARTMENT OF
AGRICULTURE

Division of Plant Industries
2270 Old Penitentiary Road
Boise, ID 83712

Phone: 208-332-8620

Fax: 208-334-2283

E-mail: info@agri.idaho.gov



Japanese Beetles in Your Neighborhood

Japanese beetles (*Popillia japonica*) are destructive invasive pests of over 300 kinds of plants and turf. Their detection in parts of Idaho during the summer of 2012 has important implications for the state's agricultural production and nursery industries, especially on issues regarding trade and export. Japanese beetles are also aggravating pests of home lawns and gardens that destroy both ornamental and vegetable plants.

Early detection and rapid response to this pest can prevent its permanent establishment in Idaho. For this strategy to be effective, the cooperation of both the public and affected industries is crucial.

Because Japanese beetles have recently been detected in your neighborhood, you may be asked to help with eradication efforts.

During the winter, you will be invited to attend a public information meeting conducted by ISDA staff to discuss the insect and control options. The meeting will be advertised well in advance through local media and civic organizations, and by posters placed around your neighborhood.

If you have any questions, please call ISDA at 208-332-8620 and ask to speak to someone in the Japanese Beetle Program, or you may e-mail us at info@agri.idaho.gov.

Questions and Answers About Japanese Beetles in Idaho

How did Japanese beetles make their way to Idaho?

Japanese beetles first arrived in the U.S. in New Jersey in 1916 on iris plants from Japan. Since then, they have spread throughout the Eastern half of the country, causing significant economic damage and destroying many landscapes. Most states east of the Mississippi River are regulated for Japanese beetle, meaning that they cannot freely ship live host plants to Western states without rigorous treatments and inspections. Japanese beetle is mainly spread in untreated or inadequately treated nursery stock and sod, and most likely arrived in Idaho in nursery stock.

How do Japanese beetles threaten Idaho?

Japanese beetles are highly destructive, invasive insects that feed voraciously on plants, shrubs, tree leaves and roots of lawn grass and turf. Once established, they can be very difficult and expensive to control. Once here, the insect could impact the ability to grow gardens, and to enjoy private property and quality of life. JB threatens Idaho's multi-million dollar fruit, vegetable and greenhouse nursery industry, especially in the areas of trade and export. The problems caused by JB could eventually affect every Idahoan if it is not stopped now before the population becomes established. In a similar eradication program in Utah, the estimated consumer cost to control JB was \$500,000 per year, with eradication achieved within 6 years. In both the short and the long terms, total eradication of the insect from Idaho is the best choice for both industries and homeowners.

What is the current situation in Idaho?

During the summer of 2012, Japanese beetles were unexpectedly caught during ISDA's routine annual monitoring program. As soon as the beetles were found, several delimitation traps were placed to determine the outer edges of the populations to help assess the situation. During the delimitation process, the most beetles were caught in traps placed throughout Boise, and smaller numbers were found in traps in Kootenai and Bannock counties.

In all three areas, the beetle populations were determined to be low enough that, with cooperation from affected industries and citizens, eradication is achievable. Further delimiting traps have been placed to refine the margins of the beetle populations, and plans to eradicate the insect are being formulated. *ISDA has not declared an official insect emergency yet, and hopes to avoid having to do so.* We anticipate that voluntary cooperation will be great enough to accomplish eradication of JB in Idaho.



Photo by BHG
Rose leaves skeletonized by JB adults

What will eradication of Japanese beetles in Idaho involve?

Idaho's plan will closely follow that of a recent successful eradication effort in Utah. If funding is available, trained and licensed lawn care professionals will spread a common insecticide on lawns and soil in early to mid June 2013. This will help kill the beetle while it lives underground. In late June and early July, one to two applications of another common insecticide will be sprayed on trees, shrubs and other above ground vegetation to kill adult beetles.

What could happen if Japanese beetles establish in Idaho?

Japanese beetles are the target of quarantines restricting interstate shipment of nursery stock and soil to California, Nevada, Utah, Oregon, Washington, New Mexico, Arizona, Idaho, Montana, Colorado and British Columbia, Canada. If JB were to become established in Idaho, nursery growers here would be required to add expensive monitoring and treatment regimes to all host plants and soil to be sold outside of the state. Some states and other countries simply refuse to accept shipments from JB-infested states. The impact on the nursery industry would be severe.



Photo by Animal Planet

In addition, Idaho gardeners and landscapers would have to deal with a relentless pest that destroys ornamental and garden plants at a furious pace.

What should I do now?

- Learn more about Japanese beetles at: http://www.aphis.usda.gov/plant_health/plant_pest_info/jb/index.shtml
- When gardening or landscaping, consider using ornamental plants and trees that Japanese beetles are not drawn to such as begonias, common lilacs, dusty miller, holly, hydrangeas, euonymus, forsythia, caladiums, pine trees, red maple, white and red oak and so forth.
- This winter, watch for announcements for an ISDA Public Meeting to discuss eradication of Japanese beetles in your neighborhood.