

What's eating my tree? Japanese Beetles

With the return of June to Illinois comes the arrival of the familiar Japanese Beetle (*Popillia japonica*), which descend *en masse* upon linden, crabapple, cherry, and Japanese maple trees, along with roses and several other plants.

Although the insect may be relatively attractive -- as far as pests go -- their effects are far from pretty. The metallic green and copper insects, marked with a row of white spots on either side of its body (fig. 1), emerge from June through July. They feed on the upper surface of leaves and work from the top of the crown downward, preferring to dine in full sunlight. The result of their feeding is a distinctive lace-like skeletonization (fig. 3). Eggs are laid in the soil, where the ugly-duckling larvae (fig. 2) feed on roots, especially grasses.

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