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Japanese Beetles Wreak Havoc on Missouri's Plants

JUNE 30TH 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

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Missouri - The Japanese beetle and the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) are two invasive insects that are wreaking havoc on Missouri's plants and trees. To the untrained eye, these two pests may look similar to one another. However, there are a few easy ways to figure out which green pest is plaguing your yard.

"It's easy to tell these two beetle species apart, even though both are metallic green in color and about a half-inch long," said MDC Forest Entomologist Robbie Doerhoff. "EAB is slender and bullet shaped, while Japanese beetles are much wider and have copper-colored wing covers."

Japanese Beetle

Japanese beetles were first discovered in North America in 1916, likely imported from Asia in potted plants. Japanese beetles can now be found through much of Missouri, with high populations in some areas.

Japanese beetles are leaf "skeletonizers," feeding on the upper surface of leaves and leaving behind a lacy network of leaf veins. They can feed upon more than 300 different types of plants and are frequently seen on grape vines, rose bushes, and elm, linden, sassafras, and fruit trees. In Missouri, these pests are usually present in June and July.

"Japanese beetles can defoliate an entire tree in just a few days. Good tree care, such as proper mulching and watering during dry spells, becomes very important in helping

reduce stress to damaged trees," said Doerhoff.

For light infestations of Japanese beetles on shrubs and small trees, Doerhoff recommends hand-picking beetles and putting them in soapy water. While several insecticides are available to control these pests, caution is in order.

"If you decide to use insecticides, select a product labeled for Japanese beetles and the plant type you want to protect. To avoid killing beneficial insects such as bees and butterflies, don't apply insecticides to blooming plants," she said.

Circle G located on Market Street behind Busy B has Japanese Beetle Traps for just a few dollars and rumor is they work GREAT!!!

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