

BILLBUG

Sphenophorus brunipennis

ecogrow



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Above: Adult Billbug
Right: Billbug Larvae



Damage:

In Australia this turfgrass weevil has been incorrectly referred to as the Billbug. This is primarily due to related *Sphenophorus* species in the United States known as Billbugs. The correct name of the pest is La Plata weevil and is regarded as a significant turfgrass pest in Australia where it occurs. This La Plata weevil is native to South America and has been recorded in Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia and Chile. The genus *Sphenophorus* contains in excess of 70 species, most of which occur in North America where several species have become economic pests over a short period of time. Named by Ernst Germar in 1824, *Sphenophorus brunipennis* is the only *Sphenophorus* species known to occur in Australia and New Zealand.

EN Features

- * Proven Performance
- * Rapid Control of Pest
- * Easy to use
- * Development of resistance unlikely
- * Non Toxic
- * Compatible with most turf registered Chemicals January.
- * No impact on beneficial soil organisms
- * No registration required
- * No withholding period
- * No special equipment required
- * No safety requirements
- * No disposal problems
- * Valuable positive public relations

The billbug larvae cause the most damage to turf grass plants. The adults deposit their eggs in cavities made by the feeding habits of the adult, which hollow out a grass stem. Young larvae begin to tunnel up and down the stem. Eventually the larvae become too large and fall to the surface where they start feeding on roots and crowns. This is when severe damage occurs. Overseas literature indicates the larvae are fully grown between 35-50 days and pupate in the thatch where a tiny adult emerges 8-10 days later.

Damage occurs primarily from November through to January. Infected turf will turn yellow initially and then brown as the larvae chew through stolons and rhizomes. The turf can easily be removed from the soil similar to scarab beetle damage. A second generation may occur in February if environmental conditions are favorable, and third generations have been reported in rare instances.

Control:

ENs provide a very effective control for billbug larvae, and are especially virulent against third instars and beyond.

Apply only at dusk when soil temperature is above 12 degrees and less than 30 degrees. Pre-irrigate the area to be treated thoroughly (if dry), and then apply the ENs with at least 500 litres of water per hectare. Always apply evenly, and a cross-hatch pattern can be used if required.

Irrigate again (9 - 12 mm) after applying ENs, and maintain good soil moisture over the next few weeks. Good results are achieved within 7 to 14 days following treatment.

Continue to monitor turf quality and inspect for reducing larvae populations.

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