

## The Extension Connection

By Megan Vig

This week I share an update on Japanese beetles from the NDSU Extension Yard and Garden Report. Fortunately, there were not any Japanese beetles found within traps in Griggs County this year. However, these beetles were collected in 22 other North Dakota counties.

The Japanese beetle is one of the biggest threats to landscapes in North Dakota. The pest devours over 300 types of plants including lawns, roses, lindens, elms, grapes, apples and chokecherries.

This pest is rapidly spreading across our state. In 2016, 386 beetles were captured in 12 counties. In 2017, the number spiked to 1,467 beetles in 22 counties.

Is it time to panic? No, it's time to fight back. Much of this increase in beetles is related to shipments of infested plants from a wholesale nursery in Minnesota. Once this was discovered, the North Dakota Department of Agriculture (NDDA) effectively worked with 80 local nurseries to treat and/or remove infested plants. Eighty percent of the 1,467 beetles caught in our state were at these nurseries.

This nursery in the Twin Cities (where most of North Dakota's plants come from) has taken steps to prevent the shipment of infested plants in the future. All potted plants shipped to North Dakota will be drenched in an insecticide to kill any beetle larvae in the soil. The plants will then be sprayed with insecticide to kill any adult beetles. This method had been used in the past and proven to be very effective.

Our best defense against this pest will be our bitter cold winters. Japanese beetle larvae are in the soil now, typically 2-6 inches deep. Let's hope for some frigid temperatures preferably without a snow blanket, for a couple weeks to kill these pests.

We can help by keeping our eyes open for the pest. The beetle emerges in June and is easy to identify. It is 3/8-inch long with a metallic green head and bronze wings. There are tufts of white hair that run along its sides. The beetle is quite beautiful BUT it will destroy your plants.

If you ever see this pest, kill it (spray with soap or any common insecticide such as Sevin) and report it to your local NDSU Extension Office. We can work with NDDA and prevent a colony from forming.

It's unrealistic to think we can eliminate Japanese beetles in North Dakota, but with our focused efforts and cold winters, we can slow its spread and minimize its damage.