

## Cranefly Control

Many lawn problems are incorrectly attributed to cranefly damage. A healthy well-cared for lawn can tolerate a fairly high population without showing signs of distress.

### *Here are some tips on how to diagnose and treat cranefly.*

- Craneflies have one generation per year. Adults fly from July into October. Eggs hatch within two weeks and larvae quickly begin feeding. Cranefly larvae overwinter in a semi-dormant state and begin heavy feeding in February/March, continuing through late April/May when they pupate.
- Cranefly damage appears as thinning patches of lawn as spring growth occurs. Turf will feel weakly attached if you tug on it.
- One of the best indicators of large populations is heavy feeding by birds, especially crows and starlings.
- You can count populations directly by pulling back the turf in suspected areas. Counts need to be quite high (25-50 larvae per square foot) to be damaging.
- Brown patches in summer are NOT cranefly related and are usually caused by lack of irrigation.
- Populations can be naturally lowered by reducing irrigation after Labor Day.
- Larvae can be controlled in early November or early April by using a chemical control containing bifenthrin or cyfluthrin. Beneficial nematodes may also be helpful.

### *The best defense is a healthy, well-maintained lawn.*

- "Dr. Earth" or "Whitney Farms". An easy way to remember when to fertilize is around the following holidays: Labor Day, Thanksgiving, Valentine's Day and Memorial Day.
- Lime in the spring. (Valentine's Day is a good time). We recommend "Garden Pearls Calcium" or "Lily Miller Soil Sweet".
- Water infrequently but deeply during our summer droughts.
- Keep your turf high (2-3") rather than short.
- Over seed weak patches in the fall. Sky has a great selection of grass seed perfect for our area.

This should keep your lawn outgrowing cranefly predation with no visible damage.