

Now the EU is wrecking our grass! Cambridge University's perfect lawns are ...

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The lawns of Cambridge University are being torn apart by crows feasting on bugs after an EU ban on a pesticide.

Lawns at seven colleges have been blighted by birds digging up ground in search of the chafer bug, a beetle that lives in soil and feeds on grass roots.

The population has soared since an EU-wide ban on a spray containing a chemical called imidacloprid. The substance was outlawed because it is harmful to bees.



Destroyed: The immaculate lawns at Cambridge University have been torn apart by crows



On the hunt: The birds are digging for the chafer bug, a beetle that feeds on grass roots



Population rise: The number of chafer bugs, pictured in Cambridge, has increased since an EU ban on a spray containing a chemical called imidacloprid, which is harmful to bees



At risk: Some colleges have been more badly affected than others. Above, Peterhouse College

The problem is so severe at two colleges, Jesus and Pembroke, that the lawn is being replaced.

Gardeners have introduced worms that eat chafer grubs in a bid to combat the problem but the method is not proving entirely successful.

A post on the Jesus College Facebook page said: 'The situation has become quite severe over the last two to three weeks and large areas of lawn have suffered as a result, First Court in particular.

'The use of nematodes has proved unreliable. Our gardeners will apply topsoil and seed along with fertiliser, which the birds dislike, once the destructiveness has ceased.'

Paul Gallant, head gardener of Selwyn College, said the damage is worse at some colleges than others because the grubs only thrive in some types of soil.



Torn up: The crows have caused bad damage to the lawns at Cambridge University, pictured



Pests: Crows pictured on the grass outside one of the colleges in Cambridge University

He said: 'The grubs like light sandy soil like the soil at Selwyn. Wolfson and Robinson don't have the problem because they're on clay.'

GET IN TOUCH

Have you had a problem with birds feeding on grubs since the EU pesticide ban? Please emailstephanie.linning@mailonline.co.uk

The chemical imidacloprid was one of three pesticides harmful to bees banned in April 2013. The law was reviewed this year but in April it was confirmed that imidacloprid is highly toxic to bumblebees and was taken off the market.

The problem could improve over winter as the cold weather will force the grubs deeper into the soil and out of the reach of crows.



Widespread problem: This patch of grass