

# BEAUTY AND ORDER

MARCH 2016

## Mole madness

We have taken numerous calls already this season about pesky trespassing moles as they have been unusually active this winter.

I am no mole expert, but I suppose it is because of the mild winter and minimal frost line.



**RANDY JAMES,**  
consulting  
arborist /  
pathologist  
and founder  
of Growing  
Concerns Inc.

I also am not an expert on ecology, but it seems to me that moles, like mosquitoes, have no reason for existence.

I guess I believe that somewhere in the greater plan they have a place, but

Lord help me in my unbelief!

Regardless of our positions on such things, it does not appear that they are on their way to extinction, so the best we can do is co-exist, but with boundaries.

And the boundary I have in mind is where our lawns start; that seems reasonable.

However, I don't think moles see it that way, so establishing a hard boundary is difficult, if not impossible.

While there are endless remedies on the "street" (like putting juicy fruit in the runs, car exhaust, flooding with a garden hose, etc.), most have not been proven effective with any defensible research that I know of.

Now hold on, that doesn't mean they don't work. Who am I to say?



Photo courtesy of Mother Nature Network

Moles can eat 70-80 percent of their body weight daily and prefer earthworms and white grubs.

While some researched treatment methods for homeowners exist, the focus for this month is dealing with their food source.

Moles' primary foods are earthworms and grubs, so we immediately run into problem No. 1, as trying to eliminate earthworms trades one problem for multiple others; probably best to yield on that one.

However, while targeting only the grubs will not guarantee success, it sure can't hurt.

Unfortunately, when treating for grubs we run into another issue.

The best fail-safe way to protect from grubs that feed on living turf

roots and damage our lawns is to use a systemic insecticide.

Systemic products are taken up by the plant, and when a pest feeds on them, they ingest the product and surrender. Thus, a systemic product makes the most sense when the goal is protecting your turf.

Unfortunately, since not all grubs in your lawn, (and eaten by moles), feed on living tissue, we have problem No. 2.

Since I know 300 words is about the limit of my interest, we better pick this up again next month.

**For more information about Growing Concerns and our residential landscape management services, visit our website at [www.growingconcerns.com](http://www.growingconcerns.com)**



**GROWING CONCERNS**

LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT

[www.growingconcerns.com](http://www.growingconcerns.com)

*Our Mission: To serve and encourage property owners by creating and protecting landscape beauty and order.*