

Frequently Asked Questions

The Montana Department of Agriculture (“MDA” or the “Department”) has recently updated the Japanese beetle quarantine orders, both exterior and interior. These are long-term quarantine orders, and good practice requires the Department to periodically review and update such orders.

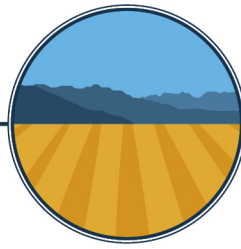
In light of the updated orders, the Department has provided responses to several frequently asked questions that members of the public might find helpful when considering these updated quarantine rules. The artificial spread of the invasive Japanese beetle continues to pose a serious threat to Montana’s nursery and agriculture industries, and the MDA remains committed to trying to prevent the spread of this pest.

- **What is the Japanese beetle?**
 - The Japanese beetle (*Popillia japonica* Newman) is a destructive turf, grass, and plant pest. In infested soil, growing grubs gnaw on grass roots causing turf to brown and die. Adult beetles feed on agricultural and ornamental plants. The adult beetles chew large, irregular holes between leaf veins, which makes the leaves resemble a piece of lace.¹
- **What does the Japanese beetle look like?**
 - Grubs (larval stage) will reach about an inch in length, and the grubs usually lie in a curled position. Adult beetles have shiny, metallic-green bodies with bronze-colored outer wings. They have six small tufts of white hair along the sides and backs of their bodies, right under the edges of their wings. They’re a little less than half an inch long. The adult males of the species are usually slightly smaller than the females.²
- **How did Japanese beetle come to the United States?**
 - The Japanese beetle was first found and recorded in the United States in a nursery in New Jersey in 1916, where it is believed to have been imported with iris bulbs from Japan.³ Since then, the beetle has spread throughout most of the Eastern and Central United States. Some states west of the Mississippi River have also found infestation areas/portions of states.
- **What makes the Japanese beetle a problem?**
 - Japanese beetles (like many other invasive species) outside of their native habitat do not have natural enemies/measures for control in the United States to balance out and control their population. The Japanese beetle population can create large-

¹ See *Japanese Beetle*, US Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (April 27, 2026), <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/plant-pests-diseases/japanese-beetle>.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Id.*, see also *Japanese Beetle: Frequently Asked Questions*, California Department of Food and Agriculture, <https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/plant/jb/faqs.html>.



scale destruction to a wide variety of both ornamental and agricultural plants, and can cause severe defoliation of plant tissues when present in high populations.

- **Where is the quarantine area in Montana?**
 - o **The updated quarantine area in Montana is described as follows:**

The following area in Yellowstone County, Montana. The north boundary is created by a straight-line due east from the intersection of Highway 3 and Alkali Creek Road to 5 Mile Road. The east boundary follows 5 Mile Road south to the Yellowstone River, which forms the southeastern boundary to South Billings Boulevard/State Secondary Highway 416. The southern boundary starts with a straight-line from South Billings Boulevard to Elysian Road and continues across Interstate 90 following Hesper Road to Shiloh Road. Shiloh Road serves as the western boundary heading north to the intersection with Rimrock Road. A straight-line connects the western boundary from the Shiloh/Rimrock intersection north to Highway 3, which the boundary follows to the intersection of Highway 3 and Alkali Creek Road.⁴

- **Why is the Department enlarging the quarantine area?**

While the Japanese beetle population has thankfully not spread beyond the greater Billings urban area, the threat posed by the pest is a serious one. MDA tracking and trapping has revealed a small but consistent population in the Yellowstone County area. To prevent the spread of this pest, the Department is keeping the long-term quarantine order in place, but has slightly revised the quarantine area to better fit the borders (using major roads to serve as boundary lines for the sake of ease of reference

⁴ See MTQ-2026-02, ¶ 3.