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Millipedes

Use Integrated Pest Management (IPM) for successful pest management.

Biology

Millipedes are arthropods in the class Diplopoda. Millipedes are characterized by being wormlike and quite elongate, with two pairs of legs on each body segment except for the front segments. These creatures may have more than 30 pairs of legs, from which they derive their name of a “thousand feet”. Size varies with species; some measure a few millimeters long while others may be up to several inches long. Sometimes confused with centipedes, which are flatter in cross-section, predacious, and fast-moving, millipedes are blocky or round in cross-section, largely detritus feeders, and slow-moving. Millipedes in our area depend on and live in damp environments and are commonly found living in moss, under damp leaves or stones, etc. During hot dry periods when damp conditions become scarce, millipedes can be seen wandering (particularly at night) and trying to enter buildings in search of a damp environment. Millipedes can also be nuisances in humid situations when they randomly enter garages and intrude under door thresholds. They can fall into basement window wells and enter the home through open basement windows, even if the window is only open a small crack. Since millipedes need moisture and of course food (rotting leaves, etc.), the home is usually not a millipede-friendly environment and ultimately they dry up and die. Millipedes will not harm humans or anything in the home.

Management Options

Non-Chemical Management

- ~ Physically destroy, vacuum, or remove and place them outdoors.
- ~ Eliminate or reduce space under door thresholds to keep millipedes out.
- ~ Secure windows and screens particularly basement windows.
- ~ Discourage entry by bug-proofing your home.

Select non-chemical management options as your first choice!

Chemical Management

IMPORTANT: Visit Home and Garden Fact Sheets for more information on using pesticides

None recommended.

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Images



~ Caption: Millipede
~ Photo by: Roger Akre