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Millipedes

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Millipedes can become pests in late summer and fall and during wet periods when they are found in large numbers in and around the home. These harmless, hard-shelled, segmented worms feed on decaying organic matter in the soil and can be identified by the **two** pairs of legs on each body segment. Millipedes often collect under flower pots, boards, in leaf litter, and in cool, damp, dark areas such as basements, crawl spaces, cement stoops and garage floors.



Millipedes live in the soil and often come out during the night and crawl around. When the sun comes up they look for moist, sheltered sites. The biggest numbers are seen in areas close to large sources of organic matter such as old fields, vacant grassy areas, and wooded areas with accumulations of leaf litter. At times (fall mainly) thousands of millipedes move from these areas and accumulate around the home each morning.

Control

If they come indoors, millipedes will die in 2-3 days because of a lack of moisture. They can be vacuumed or swept up. To prevent millipedes from coming inside, eliminate or caulk gaps around door and window frames and especially along the foundation where they often crawl up under siding. Minimize moisture sites (leaky faucets, air conditioners, broken down spouts) and consider removing organic debris such as bark mulch from the foundation as this can serve as a breeding site.

If large numbers migrate from adjacent land consider applying insecticides outside as a barrier treatment. This can be done in a 3-4 ft band along the foundation of the structure, but is often more effective if a barrier is also placed at the edge of the lawn next to the site the millipedes are migrating from. Sevin and Dursban can be used, but cooler temperatures make them less effective. Products containing synthetic pyrethroids such as cyfluthrin, permethrin and cypermethrin work under cool conditions. Granular materials or sprays applied with compressed air or hose-end sprayer can be used. Treat in a 5-10 ft band to kill the millipedes before they migrate to the structure.

For more information: Contact your County Extension Agent:

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