

Tip of the Week



Extension Tip of the Week

October 8, 2007

Millipede Migration

Have you noticed a millipede migration this fall? Millipedes only become a pest when they move indoors as accidental invaders. Millipedes live outdoors in damp areas such as under leaves, in cracks and crevices and under mulch around outdoor plantings where they feed on damp and decaying vegetable matter. They are most active at night and usually hide during the day. Most are 1 to 1 1/4 inch long with a very slender cylindrical shape and dark brown color. They characteristically coil into a spiral when handled or when they die in the corner of the basement. The typical millipede has approximately 160 very short legs on the entire length of the body underside.

Millipedes found inside wandered in by mistake, and controls should be aimed at keeping them outdoors or reducing their numbers. Cracks, gaps and other points of entry around windows and doors and in foundation walls should be sealed if possible. Removing organic matter such as plant mulch and dead leaves from against the house may help achieve control. Also, damp conditions around the house foundation should be eliminated.

Insecticides are of limited benefit in controlling millipedes because of the protected areas where millipedes originate. In warm weather when millipedes are actively wandering, residual insecticides such as Tempo, Sevin, Dursban, and diazinon can be applied as sprays in a 5- to 20-foot wide barrier around the building to reduce entry.

Indoors, the use of residual insecticides such as "ant and roach killer" or "home pest control" is not very effective. However, since the millipedes that wander in usually die in a short time (because of the dryness), spraying indoors is not practical. Sweep or vacuum up the invaders and discard. They do not feed upon building structures or furnishings, they can not bite or sting and they do not reproduce inside the house.

For more information on insects and accidental invaders in the home, refer to the ISU Extension website: <http://www.ipm.iastate.edu/ipm/hortnews/>

Tip of the Week (TOW) is emailed out weekly by Sherry McGill, Woodbury County Extension Education Director. To have the TOW emailed to you directly, please email Sherry at mcgills@iastate.edu.

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