

**INSIDE GRUNDY COUNTY**  
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In the current issue of **Horticulture & Home Pest News**, Donald Lewis, Department of Entomology wrote a column about earwigs. This insect is more abundant after prolonged periods of wet weather. This is what he had to say: Earwigs are outdoor insects that hide during the day in damp areas such as under mulch, dead leaves, logs, and piles of firewood, boards, stones and other debris or in rotted wood. They are active at night and wander in search of food and moisture. Earwigs feed on a wide variety of materials including decaying organic matter, other insects, and plants such as vegetables, flowers and ornamental plants.

Earwigs are easy to recognize by the prominent pincers or forceps on the end of the abdomen. Adults are about 5/8 inch long and dark brown with a reddish head and pale yellow-brown legs.

Earwigs may become a household pest when they wander indoors by accident. They do not cause any harm or destruction inside the house. They are merely an annoyance or nuisance because of their presence and can be swept or picked up and discarded.

Outdoor control techniques include the following: Eliminate damp, moist conditions near the house to the extent possible. Repair dripping faucets and air-conditioning units and channel water from rain gutters and spouts away from the house foundation.

Remove landscape mulch and debris (wood chips, gravel, old boards and bricks, etc.) from against the house and in areas of high numbers.

Consider trapping and physically destroying earwigs. Place burlap bags, boards, newspapers or other materials on the ground, then daily collect individuals that congregate under the cover and discard.

As a last resort insecticides can be sprayed around the house or in earwig habitats to reduce the population. Select a home garden or turfgrass insecticide such as carbaryl (Sevin), cyfluthrin, permethrin, etc. labeled for this purpose and apply according to label directions. Applications in late afternoon are preferred. Use sufficient spray water (or post-treatment irrigation) to move the insecticide through mulch materials to the hiding places underneath.

Also in this issue of **Horticulture and Home Pest News**, Richard Jauron, Department of Horticulture, had the following suggestions for summer lawn care: Kentucky bluegrass lawns should be mowed at a height of 3 to 3 ½ inches during the summer months.

Never remove more than 1/3 of the total leaf area at any one time. Accordingly, a lawn being mowed at a height of 3 inches should be cut when it reaches a height of 4 ½ inches. Removing more than 1/3 of the leaf area weakens the turfgrass and reduces its capacity to withstand additional environmental stresses. Weakened turf is also more likely to be invaded by weeds.

If possible, mow in the cool of the morning or evening. Mowing at midday may place additional stress on the turf. Also, make sure the mower blade is sharp. Dull blades tear and bruise the leaf tips.

For more information about earwigs or lawn care, contact the Grundy office of ISU Extension at 319-824-6979.