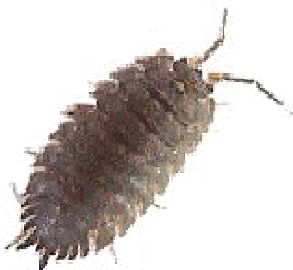


PEST CONTROL SERVICE

Pest Information Leaflet No. 7

WOODLICE



2002-2003
Crime Reduction in Rural Areas
2004-2005
Services for Older People

Description

There are approximately 35 species of woodlice in Britain, all characterised by a body design of flattened overlapping plates and large front antennae. The most common, the garden woodlouse is approximately 15mm in length. Other well known crustacea include lobsters, crabs, prawns and sandhoppers. The relationship of woodlice to other crustacea is shown by the fact that the female carries her eggs around in a special brood pouch, and that they breathe through gills.

Biology and Habitat

Being a crustacean the woodlouse must maintain body water because the gills can only function if they are kept damp. If a woodlouse enters a dry room it will die within a few hours. They favour living in damp areas, particularly where there is decaying vegetable matter on which they feed. They are always found in cool damp situations such as under stones, under bark and dead leaves, but cause no damage if they wander indoors.

The mated female carries the eggs until they hatch, and each brood may contain upwards of 70 young. When hatched the young proceed to develop by a succession of skin moults and reach full size within one year. They usually move away from their habitat and into houses in search of protection from the onset of cold weather.

Importance

The arrival of woodlice inside premises is considered by many as unpleasant and unacceptable. However, they do not present any risk to health.

Control

The cause of dampness must be removed and then they will disappear. Clear debris and refuse from the garden, particularly close to affected buildings and apply a crawling insect powder suitable for garden use to likely harbourage areas, e.g. beneath paving slabs. Vacuuming regularly those rooms, which have been invaded, is probably the most convenient way to deal with them indoors.

Safety

Before using an insecticide, to protect yourself and others and to minimise damage to the environment **ALWAYS READ AND FOLLOW THE APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS PRINTED ON THE CONTAINER**

Pest Control Service

Stroud District Council's Pest Control Service can provide a professional treatment for woodlice infestations indoors. For advice and current charges please telephone Stroud 754919 or write to:

Pest Control Service
Environmental Health Service
Stroud District Council
Ebley Mill, Westward Road
Stroud, Glos. GL5 4UB

e-mail:- environmental.health@stroud.gov.uk

Leaflets Available in this Series

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- 7 Woodlice
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- 14 Rats
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