Centipedes Identification and Biology

By DoMyOwn staff

Physical Appearance

Centipedes - often referred to as "hundred-legged worms"- have an elongated body made up of many segments (anywhere from 15 to 173), with 1 pair of legs per segment. The head has a pair of antennae and the body may be yellowish-orange to reddish-brown (outdoor centipedes) or whitish-yellow (house centipede) in color.

Behavior & Habitat

Centipedes scurry along very quickly, and are among the fastest of non-flying arthropods. The house centipede prefers cool, damp, outdoor locations under rocks, wood piles, or compost piles. Centipedes may also spend a lifetime living indoors in moist or otherwise humid areas such as basements where conditions are favorable.

Feeding Habits

Centipedes are insectivores that feed on other small insects such as cockroaches, bedbugs, silverfish and house flies.

Life Cycle

Centipedes may live up to 6 years. Adults most often overwinter to avoid the cold, and lay eggs in the warmer spring months. Centipedes are born with as few as four pairs of legs, gaining a new set with each molting.

Damage

The Centipede is relatively harmless to humans, though it may occasionally inflict a painful bite (like a bee sting). The Centipede is a nuisance by it's presence, frightening speed, and alarming appearance. Centipedes do not cause damage to furniture or food.

General Prevention & Control:

- Seal up cracks in walls and other possible points of entry.
- Dry up wet or damp areas where centipedes thrive, and remove outdoor harborages (such as compost, wood, or leaf piles, etc.) away from the home.
- Treat baseboards and problem areas with **Suspend SC** or **Demand CS**.

For more detailed information on Centipede prevention and control, see **How to Get Rid of Centipedes**

View all Centipede Control Products