

HOME GROUNDS FACT SHEET

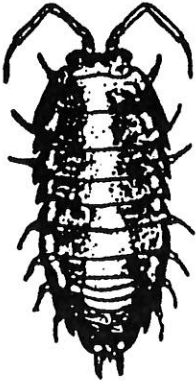


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Sowbugs and Pillbugs



Sowbug

Sowbugs and Pillbugs are not insects nor arachnids (spiders, mites) but members of the crustacean class (lobster, shrimp). They have oval bodies, 1/8" to 1/2" long, are dark gray in color and have many legs. Hard shell-like segments across the back give them an armadillo-like appearance. Pillbugs have the unique habit of rolling up like a ball when disturbed. Both Sowbugs and Pillbugs are nocturnal and prefer moist, dark conditions. They are often found under

rocks, bits of wood or vegetable garden debris.

Occasionally Sowbugs and Pillbugs invade homes, but do little damage. They are usually found in dark, moist areas such as laundry rooms or damp basements with dirt floors.

Sowbugs and Pillbugs feed on decaying vegetative matter and are destructive to plants only when their population becomes very large. Under these conditions, they may feed on the fine roots of garden or greenhouse plants.

Integrated Pest Management (IPM)

Considerations

IPM is a common sense approach to pest control and plant care. It employs a number of measures to prevent, control or reduce problems. Always use the least toxic methods first.

A good mechanical control, in many instances, is to vacuum the insects and then throw the bag away. Regarding household pests, in addition to regular housecleaning, the best preventive method is to monitor the home, i.e. note any cracks in foundations, air spaces between windows and frames, poorly-fitting doors, moisture from leaks, etc., and correct such examples/situations.

Management

Outdoors

Try to eliminate breeding sites whenever possible and clean up debris (rocks, boards, leaves, etc.). Chemical pesticides are available. If you choose to use chemical pesticides, contact your local Cooperative Extension office for specific recommendations. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for dilution and application. (Dust forms are more effective.)

Indoors

Repair cracks in foundation walls and seal any cracks around doors, basement windows and similar openings with caulking compounds. Prevent entrance into homes by spraying outside 10 to 15 feet around the outer perimeter. If infestation warrants, you may spray with a household formulation. Chemical pesticides are available. If you choose to use chemical pesticides, contact your local Cooperative Extension office for specific recommendations. But sweeping up or vacuuming up Sowbugs is effective.

"This publication contains pesticide recommendations. Changes in pesticide regulations occur constantly and human errors are still possible. Some materials mentioned may no longer be available, and some uses may no longer be legal. All pesticides distributed, sold or applied in New York State must be registered with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). Questions concerning the legality and/or registration status for pesticide use in New York State should be directed to the appropriate Cornell Cooperative Extension specialist or your regional DEC office (631) 444-0340. Read the label before applying any pesticide. Cornell Cooperative Extension and its employees assume no liability for the effectiveness or results of any chemicals for pesticide usage. No endorsement of products is made or implied."

B-2-29 JES/cms reviewed RT 1/03

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