

Invading Insects

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When dealing with ants, boxelder bugs, millipedes and spiders prevention is the first order of control. Make sure all cracks crevices and air infiltration around doors and windows are plugged up or filled in. Also using a general purpose insecticide around the outside of the house in the spring and fall paying special attention to around doors, windows and other opening such as water pipes, electrical lines etc. This should eliminate 90+% of the problem.

Ants can be controlled with baits quite easily. Not all ant species can be controlled by baits and some baits work better than others. Sugar-loving ants are the easiest to control. The most successful baits are those that contain a slow-acting stomach poison so the foraging ant workers will take the bait back to the queen. Big-headed ants, little black ants and pavement ants prefer grease and protein; in addition, they will also feed on fruit juices. They respond best to protein/grease baits. I recommend baits with boric acid or hydramethylnon as their active ingredient.

For most people, the boxelder bug needs no introduction. This insect is about one-half inch long as an adult, black in color with three red lines behind the head, a red line along each side and a diagonal line on each wing. Boxelder bugs become a nuisance in and around homes from fall through early spring. The boxelder bug overwinters as an adult in protected places such as houses and other buildings, cracks or crevices in walls, doors, under windows, and around foundations--particularly on south and west exposures. Boxelder bugs are primarily a nuisance pest, annoying residents by crawling on exteriors and inside dwellings on warm fall and winter days.

Centipedes and millipedes are not insects because they have more than six legs, but they are closely related invertebrates. When outdoors, these invertebrates are not noticed, but they may be considered pests when they share living space with us. Both of these groups of invertebrates have long, segmented bodies with either one pair (centipedes) or two pairs (millipedes) of legs on each segment. The house centipede is found throughout the United States. This centipede can be found outside under stones, boards, or sticks or beneath moist leaf litter and other organic matter. When disturbed, centipedes move swiftly toward darkened hiding places. When they are found in homes, they are often found in moist basements, damp closets and in bathrooms. Centipedes require moist habitats. If they are

Millipedes are similar to centipedes, but have two pairs of legs per body segment. Millipedes are usually brown to blackish in color. They usually coil up when disturbed, similar to the behavior exhibited by sowbugs or pillbugs (a related invertebrate). Millipedes are usually restricted to moist places where they feed on organic matter. In the fall, they may become a

nuisance because they migrate away from feeding areas and invade homes. Because they crawl along the ground, they are usually found in lower floors and basements. Once inside the home, they usually die due to desiccation, although in moist basements, they can survive longer.

Spiders can be divided into one of two groups depending on how they capture their prey: hunting (sometimes known as wandering) spiders and web-building spiders. All spiders produce silk, but hunting spiders do not construct webs to capture food. Instead, they rely on their quickness and relatively good eyesight to capture prey this family of spiders are the ones we see the most in homes. Web-building spiders construct webs in rather quiet, undisturbed places to capture their food. The common brown house spider can be mistaken for the hobo spider. All spiders can bite but very few are poisonous.

The easiest way to get rid of these insects inside is with a vacuum cleaner or glue boards although there are several good insecticides to use indoors and outdoors such as Tempo or Astro.

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