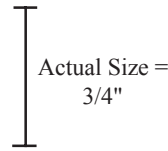


PEST CONTROL BULLETIN NO. 13

EARWIGS



GENERAL INFORMATION

Earwigs (Order Dermaptera) are common insects which may cause considerable concern to some people when seen in or about their house, yard, or garden. However, while their presence may be annoying or unsanitary, they are otherwise harmless, and cannot sting, nor bite or pinch hard enough to cause any injury to the skin of people. Our species are mostly brownish, slender, one-half to three-quarter of an inch long, and with forceps or pincers at the back end. Wing covers, if present, are short and leathery.

HABITS AND DAMAGE

There are several species here with variable habits, but they all prefer to inhabit damp soil with a cover of leaf mold, low growing plants, trash or objects under which they can hide, especially during the day. The European earwig has one generation a year, reproduction occurring in the winter or spring from eggs laid in the soil. Most earwigs are scavengers, feeding on decaying vegetable or animal matter. They may emit a foul odor which can make the insects obnoxious inside a house.

Our most common house infesting species here is the Shore (or Riparian) earwig, *Labidura riparia* (Pallas). It is our largest species, being one inch long. This species is mainly predaceous on other insects which it finds, including cutworms, caterpillars, small grubs, maggots, mealybugs, fleas, and some other small immature invertebrate animals.

Another common species here is the ring-legged earwig, *Euborellia annulipes* (Lucas), which is mainly a scavenger.

The one species we have which is mainly a feeder on some vegetable and garden plants is the European earwig, *Forficula auricularia* (Linn). It is more common in the north coastal area than here. If present in sufficient numbers, its damage by chewing on plants could warrant control measures.

CONTROL

Exclusion from buildings is possible if doors, windows, or other exterior openings are weather stripped or tightly fitted to avoid cracks and openings.

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This information is provided to help homeowners with their pest problems. Insecticides may be purchased at nurseries, hardware, farm supply, and pet stores. If additional help is needed, contact with a licensed pest control operator is suggested.

No endorsement of trade names or products is intended nor is criticism implied of similar products not mentioned.

PRECAUTIONS

1. Handle insecticides with care and follow instructions on the label.
2. Do not use around open flame or exposed foods, and always clean food preparation areas after the use of pesticides.
3. Store out of reach of children and pets, preferably in locked cabinets.
4. Never keep pesticides in anything other than the original container.
5. Never reuse the pesticide container to store any other materials.
6. Dispose of all empty containers by placing them in the trash can for removal to the local disposal area.



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