

Silverfish & Firebrats

These primitive insects feed on all sorts of organic matter but are especially fond of stored grains, dried meat, flour, and cereal. They may also damage paper products, fabrics (mostly cotton) and books.

These wingless insects are 1/2"-3/4" long and silvery grey or brown in color. They have long antennae on the head end and bristles on the tail end. Compared to other insects they are very long-lived, living as long as several years.

Silverfish and firebrats may infest an entire dwelling but may also be confined to the crawlspace, attic or even the roof. Roof infestations have been associated with damp, moss-covered shake shingles. If only a few individuals are found indoors it is likely that the infestation is outside the living space.

Control. Moisture reduction is very important. Damp crawlspaces and damp attic or roof areas support infestations. The soil surface in a crawlspace should be covered with a plastic vapor barrier and moss and algae should be treated and removed from the roof.

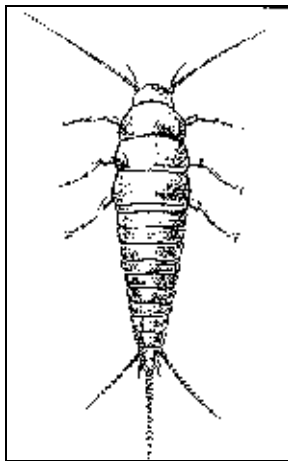
If the infestation is confined to a storage area important items can be placed in sealed containers. Clothing that is in regular use and routinely cleaned is unlikely to be damaged by these insects. Clothing in storage should be clean and sealed in boxes or bags. Do not use "moth balls" or crystals as these are quite hazardous and usually ineffective.

Residual insecticides, applied by the homeowner or by a pest control professional,

offer some protection but may expose occupants to the same toxic materials. Some of the least toxic materials are those containing some form of boric acid or silica gel.

In summary - you should eliminate any moisture problems where silverfish and firebrats can breed, clean-up papery or starchy debris, and store valuable articles in sealed boxes or bags. Use residual insecticides only as a last resort.

Homeowners can purchase effective aerosols and dusts from lawn and garden stores. Check the label for instructions for controlling silverfish. Aerosol "bombs" are generally not effective for silverfish or firebrats.



Silverfish

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