

Earwigs



Description

This insect is approximately 14mm (approximately ½ an inch) in length, is dark brown in colour, and has a conspicuous pair of "pincers" at its rear end. It lives in the soil or beneath stones and bark of trees but will often enter houses.

Life Cycle

In the autumn, earwigs form cells beneath the surface of the ground, in tree stumps or in rotting wood. Eggs are laid in January or February which hatch in about two months. The young nymphs reach maturity in a further three to four months.

Food

The earwig seeks its food at night and lives mainly on vegetable matter often destroying flower petals and other tender foliage. It may also eat living and dead insects. Indoors it is just a harmless nuisance but will occasionally attack foodstuffs.

Significance

This pest has no public health significance whatsoever and will not bite humans or pets.

Control Measures

All the infested food should be removed from the kitchen and disposed of. The affected area can be sprayed with an aerosol or insecticide powder which can be purchased from a chemist, hardware shop or garden centre. There are many different makes and brand names available. You should choose one designed for crawling insects and one that is designed for use inside the house. Read the instructions carefully and only apply as indicated.

Insecticides should not be used close to potted plants or goldfish bowls. Powders and sprays should not be applied where pets and children can come into contact with them either directly or by crawling over treated areas.

Insecticides should not, generally, be used in kitchens or food storage areas.

