

# Woodlice



## Description

- Woodlice are not insects but small crustaceans, the same class of animals which includes crabs, lobsters, prawns and crayfish.
- They are slate grey in colour and measure approximately 12mm to 13mm (approximately ½ an inch) in length.
- They are frequently found, sometimes in large numbers, in damp places both inside and outside dwellings.
- Some woodlice come indoors, especially during the cooler autumn and winter weather.



## Lifestyle

- Woodlice have to live in damp places for the gills can only function if they are kept damp.
- Woodlice in houses are entirely casual visitors, searching usually for some protection from the start of the cold weather.
- They feed mainly on plant matter, but may also gnaw on dead animals.
- They are encouraged by the build up of vegetation in pot plants or other suitable places immediately outside the house.

## Significance

- Woodlice are of no public health significance and will not bite humans or pets.
- When large numbers of woodlice are seen indoors it means that the atmosphere is too damp.

## Control

- Control of woodlice indoors can be achieved simply by cleaning the room.
- Woodlice do not breed indoors.
- They can be excluded from a room by sealing potential entry points, but take care that you do not cover up air bricks which are built for under-floor ventilation.
- 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 or 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.