



SOWBUGS & PILLBUGS

Though not dangerous, these creatures can be a nuisance simply by their presence

Description

Sowbugs are slightly elongated to oval with a flattened body (up to 3/4 inch long). Brownish or slate gray, they are wingless and possess well-developed eyes, seven pairs of legs and overlapping "armored" plates. Sowbugs have two tail-like structures on the rear end and cannot roll up into a ball when disturbed.



Pillbugs are often referred to as "roly-polies" because of their habit of rolling up into a tight ball when disturbed. They are similar in appearance to a sowbug, but do not have any tail like structures.

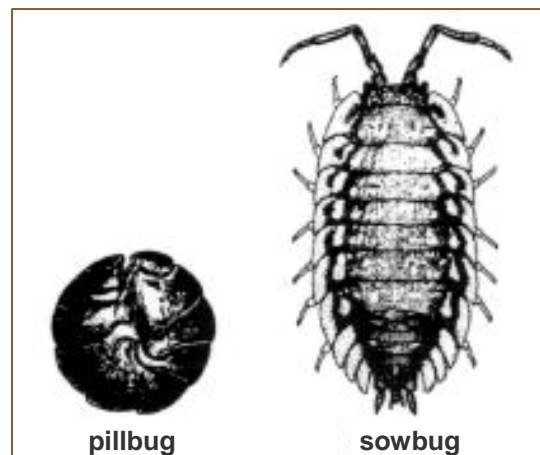
Location

Sowbugs and pillbugs live outdoors but may occasionally enter structures in basements, first-floor levels, and other damp areas such as around drain pipes, inside bottom cabinets, and around baseboards.

Life Cycle

Though they mate throughout the year, sowbugs and pillbugs are most active in the spring. The

female carries the eggs, numbering from 7 to 200, in a brood pouch on the underside of her body. Eggs hatch in three to seven weeks, and the young are white-colored. They remain in the brood pouch for six to eight weeks until they are able to take care of themselves. There may be as many as two generations per year, with individuals living up to three years.



Monitoring

Examine areas where moisture and food sources such as animal droppings, paper, and other decaying organic material may be found.

Cultural Methods

Because sowbugs and pillbugs require moisture to survive, keeping the building as dry as possible on both the inside and outside will greatly enhance control of this occasional pest.

Pesticides

Chemical control of sowbugs and pillbugs is rarely required. But if control is needed, treat with a commercially available spray pesticide such as Spectracide™.

Douglas B. Jones, University of Illinois Extension Specialist, Integrated Pest Management, jonesd@illinois.edu

University of Illinois • U.S. Dept. of Agriculture • Local Extension Councils Cooperating
University of Illinois Extension provides equal opportunities in programs and employment.

The information in this fact sheet is for educational purposes only. References to commercial products and trade names do not constitute endorsement by the University of Illinois and do not imply discrimination against other similar products that are not listed. 2008