

## Who is that Funny worm-like looking Guy?

He is a Millipede.

In the past months, many of Osceola County homeowners have noticed a dark brown worm-like creature about 1½-inches long crawling in and around the home.

These creatures, which are called millipedes commonly known as thousand leggers belong to a group of arthropods called diplopods, which are not insects. They become nuisances when they enter our living space in large numbers. Millipedes can be seen crawling on the driveway, in the garage, on the outside of the house and, unfortunately, even in the bedroom. Because millipedes crawl, they are usually found on the lower floors of the home. Once they enter the home, they usually die due to desiccation.

They do not cause damage to the inside except for possible stains when they are crushed.

Millipedes do not sting or bite and therefore, are not poisonous but will leave an obnoxious odor on the finger when touched. They form into a coil when disturbed, exhibiting similar behavior to sowbugs and pillbugs. They prefer moist areas where they feed on organic matter.

**Preventing millipedes from entering the home:** Millipedes live in organic matter such as pine straw, mulch, leaves and wood chips. Removing piles of organic matter from close to the house will reduce the chance of millipedes entering the home. Over-watering and over-mulching of plants will also create a perfect environment for millipedes. Make sure doors and windows fit tightly and caulk cracks and crevices that will allow their entry inside. You can also apply insecticides at the base of exterior of the house. A carbaryl insecticide such as Sevin works well in reducing millipede infestations. However, it is always best to read the insecticide label before applying. Also, in order for an insecticide to be effective, it is recommended that the chemical be reapplied after a shower of rain.

**Controlling Millipedes:** Using a floor vacuum is a very safe and environmentally friendly way to remove millipedes from the home. In addition, the inside perimeter of the home can also be treated with an insecticide labelled for indoor use. Make sure pesticides are registered to control millipedes. Please note that it is very important that all bugs should be accurately identified before a pesticide is applied.

For more information on insects and other related horticulture topics, contact Grantly Ricketts with UF/IFAS Extension in Osceola County at 321-697-3000 or email [gricketts@ufl.edu](mailto:gricketts@ufl.edu).