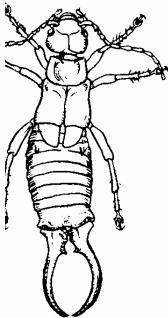


Home Grounds Fact Sheet

European Earwigs and Crickets



Earwigs

The female lays eggs in a nest in the soil. Both the female and the male live in the nest until the eggs hatch. The female takes care of the young until they leave the nest in the spring and are able to take care of themselves. The number of young in a brood averages about 30.

Earwigs hide during the day and eat at night. They hide in garden plants, in shrubbery, along fences, in woodpiles, at the base of trees, and behind loose boards on buildings.

They feed on all types of plant material including dahlias, zinnias, butterfly bush, hollyhock, lettuce, strawberry, celery, potatoes and seedling beans and beets. They damage sweet corn by feeding on the silks.

The European earwig is chiefly an outdoor insect. Individual earwigs often crawl into houses or are brought in along with flowers, vegetables, and fruit. Their habit is to hide among petals and leaves or inside fruit. Later, as flowers are being arranged or food is being prepared, they run out - or they may crawl out unnoticed, hide again, and come out at night for food and water.

The insect is spread largely by man - in bundles of plants and shrubbery, in cut flowers and in florists' equipment. Spreading by natural means is limited by the fact that earwigs seldom fly and cannot stay in flight very long. To fly they must take off from a high place such as a pole, tree or the top of a building because their wings are not strong enough to lift them from the ground.

Integrated Pest Management (IPM)

Considerations

IPM is a common sense approach to pest control and plant care. It employs a number of measures to prevent, control or reduce problems. Always use the least toxic methods first.

A good mechanical control, in many instances, is to vacuum the insects and then throw the bag away. Regarding household pests, in addition to regular house-cleaning, the best preventive method is to monitor the home, i.e. note any cracks in foundations, air spaces between windows and frames,

poorly-fitting doors, moisture from leaks, etc., and correct such examples/situations.

Natural enemies

Several species of parasitic flies are natural enemies of the earwig in Europe. None of them were here at the beginning of earwig infestation in this country, and the earwig increased rapidly. Since then, two species of the parasites have been brought from Europe and distributed in some infested areas.

The parasites are susceptible to most insecticides. Therefore, to get full benefit from them, it is best not to apply insecticide for earwig control during the early summer when the adult parasites are active.

Management

Keep areas dry (clear of damp newspapers or water-soaked carpets) and clear of compost around entrance and storage areas. Inspect vegetables and flowers, especially home-grown, before bringing into kitchen. Vacuum and clean areas that could be a habitat. Caulk or seal all unnecessary openings, cracks and crevices. Set out sticky boards in out-of-the-way places where crickets tend to congregate.

note A. Chemical pesticides are available. If you choose to use chemical pesticides, contact your local Cooperative Extension office for specific recommendations.

Precautions when using insecticides

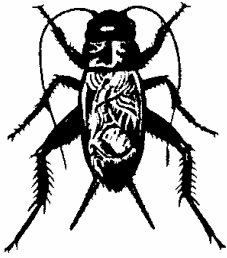
1. Follow the directions and heed all precautions on the container label. Handle insecticides with care. Keep them out of reach of children and pets.
2. When applying pesticides, try to keep the dust or spray away from your eyes, nose and mouth. After you have finished, wash all exposed surfaces of your body with soap and water.
3. If an insecticide is used indoors, apply it only to places where earwigs hide or crawl. Apply it directly to surfaces, not into the air. Do not apply it to surfaces where there is much personal contact.

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Crickets

There are a number of species of crickets. Usually they are not household pests. At times, however, two species- field crickets and house crickets- may enter homes. Occasionally other species are found in basements.

Habits and damage

Field crickets breed outdoors, where they feed on all kinds of vegetation. They enter dwellings late in summer, when vegetation becomes scarce or after crops have been harvested.

House crickets are most troublesome in dwellings located near city dumps or other areas that are filled with refuse. Large numbers of crickets may develop in these places and swarm to houses at dusk from July to September. In warm climates, house crickets may enter dwellings throughout the year.

Integrated Pest Management (IPM)

Considerations

(see Earwigs)

How to manage crickets

Close all openings to the house. Be sure doors fit well and are kept closed during the autumn months. Keep storage areas clean and dry. Distribute sticky boards in out-of-the way places to capture crickets.

note A. Chemical pesticides are available. If you choose to use chemical pesticides, contact your local Cooperative Extension office for specific recommendations.

***WHENEVER YOU USE A PESTICIDE,
ALWAYS READ THE LABEL.
FOLLOW THE MANUFACTURER'S
INSTRUCTIONS AND PRECAUTIONS.***

"This publication contains pesticide recommendations. Changes in pesticide regulations occur constantly and human errors are still possible. Some materials mentioned may no longer be available, and some uses may no longer be legal. All pesticides distributed, sold or applied in New York State must be registered with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). Questions concerning the legality and/or registration status for pesticide use in New York State should be directed to the appropriate Cornell Cooperative Extension specialist or your regional DEC office (631) 444-0340. Read the label before applying any pesticide. Cornell Cooperative Extension and its employees assume no liability for the effectiveness or results of any chemicals for pesticide usage. No endorsement of products is made or implied."