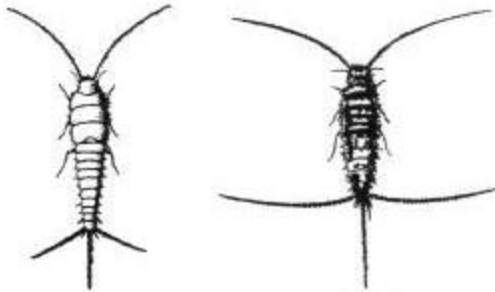


CONTROL OF SILVERFISH AND FIREBRATS

(Adapted from Agriculture Canada Publication 1057[1981])

Silverfish and firebrats are slender, wingless, scale-covered insects, about 13mm long when full-



Silverfish

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Firebrat

grown. They have two long slender antennae, and three long stiff appendages at the tip of the abdomen. Silverfish are uniformly silver in colour; firebrats are grayish, mottled with darker gray scales. A female of either insect may lay 10 to 100 eggs, in undisturbed corners and crevices or in the open. The newly hatched young look like the adults. They grow slowly, taking 1 to 3 years to reach full size. The females,

however, are able to lay eggs when they are 3 months old. Silverfish have been known to survive for more than 300 days without food.

Both insects are found in many types of buildings, including new apartment and office buildings, dwellings, bakeries, and libraries, especially in warm secluded places. Silverfish occur in basements, as well as almost any other part of buildings; firebrats are often found in furnace rooms and bakeries, near radiators and heat pipes, and in other warm locations.

Silverfish prefer temperatures between 22° to 27°C; firebrats thrive best at 27° to 41°C. Both flourish when the relative humidity is high. When the insects are disturbed, they run away quickly and hide.

Silverfish and firebrats eat mainly material of vegetable origin, particularly substances containing starch and sugar. They damage glazed paper, and glued or pasted materials such as bookbindings and wallpaper. They eat bonding glue in wood-processing plants, and are carried to construction sites on wallboard. The insects can damage cotton, linen, or rayon, especially if the fabric has been treated with sizing; and they may become more troublesome as the use of treated synthetic fabrics increases. They are fond of moist wheat flour and other cereal products containing starch.

CONTROLS

CULTURAL:

Silverfish and firebrats, like many other household pests, thrive best where they are undisturbed for long periods. Vacuum and clean your house often, and do not leave stored books and clothing undisturbed for long periods. If you have fabrics of the type favoured by these insects, hang them

outdoors occasionally, preferably on a hot, sunny summer day or a clear, cold day in winter. Do not let trash accumulate; it provides ideal shelter for insects of all kinds.

Small glass jars, quarter filled with water, can be used as traps, if the outsides are covered with masking tape. The tape enables the insects to crawl up, but they are unable to escape from the jar, once they have fallen in. No bait is necessary.

CHEMICAL:

Dusts - Use a dust rather than a spray if you have to treat areas near furnaces and hot water heaters where there is a fire hazard, and in libraries where sprays may soil or damage books and papers. Use 2% diazinon. Dust infested areas lightly, and if these areas are extensive, use a dust gun to force the material through cracks into wall spaces. Apply the dust behind books on library shelves. However, do not use dusts where children and pets may contact dusted surfaces.

Boric acid and diatomaceous earth are also effective. These dusts, applied in areas where silverfish and firebrats frequent, are abrasive to the insects' exoskeleton and eventually result in desiccation of the pest. As with chemical dusts, these materials should not be used where children or pets will contact them.

Sprays - A spray is less conspicuous than a dust, and leaves a residue lethal to the insects on baseboards and other vertical surfaces to which dusts do not adhere. Use a spray containing one of the following:

methoxychlor	malathion	diazinon
pyrethrin	propoxur	allethrin
permethrin	resmethrin	chlorpyrifos
fenthion		

Control in Multiple-Unit Buildings

In apartment buildings and other forms of multiple dwellings, silverfish can easily move from one unit to another. The owner or manager should spray adjacent units, or hire a licensed pest control firm to do so.

CAUTIONS

Follow closely the directions and cautions on the label. Avoid contaminating food. Keep insecticides out of the reach of children and pets, and store them in properly marked containers. If any insecticide gets on your skin, wash it off at once with soap and warm water.

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