

*In This Issue*

Millipedes—Are They Invading Your Space?

Look for Dean's New Look!

Love Bugs—The Incurrigible Romantics

Mosquito Misters Take Back Your Backyard!



# March of the Millipedes

## What They're Doing and How We Can Slow Them Down

If you've lived in Florida for more than a few years, you may be familiar with the seasonal migration of the millipede. Though there are many species, our most common local variety is known as *Oxidus garcilis*, or, the greenhouse millipede.

Despite its namesake though, this pest doesn't limit itself to the confines of any greenhouse. Instead, each year towards the eve of autumn, these poly-pedaled pests emerge nightly and begin their annual migration across lawns and through landscaping in order to mate...and they do so en masse.

It's during this veritable 'Millipede Mardi Gras' that these determined diplopods also manage to wander their way up foundations, and—in some cases—inside our homes.

Usually, these migrations are somewhat reasonable, with perhaps only a dozen or so millipedes seen outside on any given day. Other times they can seem to reach epidemic proportions. The reason for this is that millipedes aren't like other seasonal swarmers (such as blind mosqui-

toes, termites, or lovebugs) in that the severity of their swarm is directly related to immediate and local environmental conditions.

Though some may wonder—and quite understandably—why they're only just *now* seeing a milli-



migration after living in Florida for 10 years, a more appropriate question may be: "What environmental conditions are now present that haven't been present in years past?"

In fact, when called upon for millipede problems, our technicians are trained to inspect your home and property to determine which type of environmental conditions may be the root cause of this infestation.

### H2Overkill

Conditions that contribute to millipede problems include excessive leaf-litter beneath (*continued on pg 2*)

## The Unlovable Lovebug

It happens twice a year, each May and September. You step outside and notice a few black bugs floating errantly on the breeze. It's a sign—or perhaps an omen, signaling the onset of another lovebug swarm. Soon they're everywhere—loitering outside your doorstep, harassing you at gas stations, and littering the roadways like a flurry of live snowflakes waiting to decorate your windshield like a Jackson Pollock canvas.

Though they don't sting or bite, the sheer number in which they swarm can make the lovebug an extreme public nuisance and eye sore.

Despite the urban legend that these insects were created in a lab at the University of Florida and accidentally released upon the public, this is wholly untrue. The less remarkable truth is that Mother Nature is far more capricious than any mad scientist, and these bugs (well, *flies* technically—in case any entomology hobbyists are reading) have been making their way towards Florida since the 1940's, where they were able to flourish in the absence of any significant predators.

But lack of predation isn't the only factor contributing to their extraordinary numbers. The other (*continued on pg 2*)



(continued from "March of the Millipede")

landscaping, standing water (such as that found by AC units), firewood or other objects being stored too closely to the home, and gaps in weather stripping, stucco, or siding which allow easy entry into your home.

But of all conditions, by far the most common and causal is an over-watered lawn. This is because millipedes require high moisture for their survival and reproduction. Too much water, however (such as after a heavy rain), will flood millipedes out of the lawn, sending them looking for higher ground, which is often your front doorstep.

So what should you do if you find millipedes in or around your home? Well, although it's quite natural to find them outside and even the occasional wanderer inside, an inordinate number (several daily) may be an indication of an underlying problem. It's at this point that you should check your watering schedule, making sure all irrigation zones are through running just as the sun begins to rise. This allows any excess moisture to evaporate. Also, by removing any excess thatch or leaf litter you'll limit their food source and also allow these areas to maintain a proper moisture balance.

Even still, in some cases where the migrations are unusually heavy, we encourage you to contact us so that we can dispatch one of our technicians to evaluate environmental conditions and apply any appropriate products needed. By working together, you can be sure we'll keep these persistent pests at bay!



At their worst, millipede migrations can seem like a scene from a bad horror movie.

## Weathering The Swarm!

- Try to avoid driving long distances during peak lovebug swarming hours (10-11 am and 6-8 pm).
- Install an automotive grill cover for each 3-4-week swarm season.
- Remove dead lovebugs as quickly as possible to avoid paint damage.
- Keep doors and windows closed, especially during peak swarming hours.
- Avoid chemicals for the occasional lovebug you may find inside. Instead, a vacuum will provide quick and safe removal.

(continued from "The Unlovable Lovebug")

is their unique mating habit; to wit, they mate almost non-stop, even as they fly (hence the romantic nickname).

During these nuptial flights, the females are attracted to heat as well as aldehydes, a major component of car exhaust. This is why it's common to find so many along roadsides and, of course, all over your car. More than just a nuisance, if left to dry for an extended period, they may even damage the paint. In fact, in some cases this automotive assault has been known to clog radiator fins to the point of overheating vehicles!

As if their seasonal imposition wasn't bad enough, they're also nearly impossible to control. Though insecticides will kill lovebugs when they're sprayed directly, more will continue to float in right behind them.

The good news is that in the past 30 years, we've seen a continuing decrease in the severity of swarms here in Florida. There has been speculation among entomologists that this could be due to certain fungal pathogens controlling lovebug larvae populations. However, since it is unlikely that we'll ever be completely lovebug-free, we've provided a few helpful tips to help you get through the next visit from these amorous aerialists.

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## A New Year... A New Look!

If you've received one of our complimentary 2011 calendars, you've also gotten a sneak peek at our newly designed logo.

We at Dean's feel change is important and you'll notice this new look featured more prominently throughout our company in the months to come. One thing that will remain *unchanged* however, is our commitment to providing our customers with the highest quality products and the best service possible.

We'd like to say thank you for this past year of business and we look forward to serving you in the years to come!



## Remember...

Dean's Uses Termite Detecting Canines.  
Why Trust Your Home to Anything Less!

