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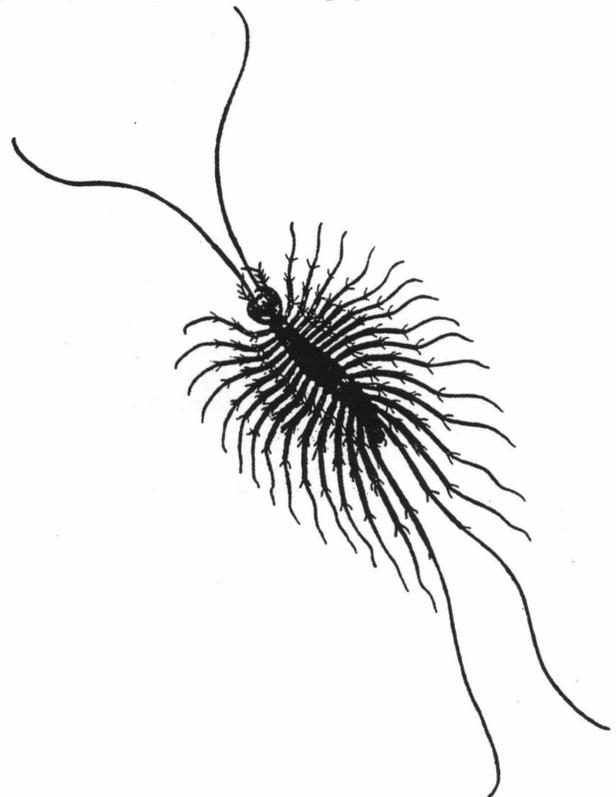
INSECT NOTES

HOUSE CENTIPEDE

Centipedes are normally outdoor creatures that feed on insects, spiders and other small animals. There are several species common to Virginia--but most go unnoticed because they are usually restricted to outdoor environments. Centipedes prefer damp conditions and are often found under stones, pieces of wood, and bark, and in piles of dead leaves. Their flattened body makes it easy for them to fit into and walk in narrow spaces. They capture their food with powerful jaws (actually modified legs!).

The **house centipede** is primarily found in houses, and **not** outdoors. It is one of those arthropods that has almost completely adapted to an association with man. It is commonly found in basements and bathrooms, but may move to other parts of the house when looking for food. The long legs (15 pairs of them!) and the ability to move very quickly) makes the house centipede an unwelcome and often feared household pest. In fact, it rarely if ever bites man (jaws are too weak)--and spends most of its time hunting and eating spiders and small insects indoors. They rarely become numerous in houses--maybe just one or two.

This household pest is often encountered in the bathroom--in the bathtub!--and homeowners assume that it has come from the drain. Not true. What happens is that the centipede may prefer the bathroom because of the high humidity there, and may walk or run into the tub (chasing a spider), but then is unable to get out because the sides are too steep and smooth. So it gets trapped in the tub! Their presence in the tub/shower early in the morning is usually unwelcomed, and just a little scary.



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Control of the house centipede is not difficult. There are usually only one or two of these animals in a house, and an aerosol spray can be used. It is not recommended to use a space spray (fogger) or to coat large surfaces with insecticide to control house centipedes. These insects move over a large area, and it is difficult to spray surfaces in hopes they will walk on them and pick up a lethal dose of insecticide. The best strategy is to direct the spray at the centipede when it is located.

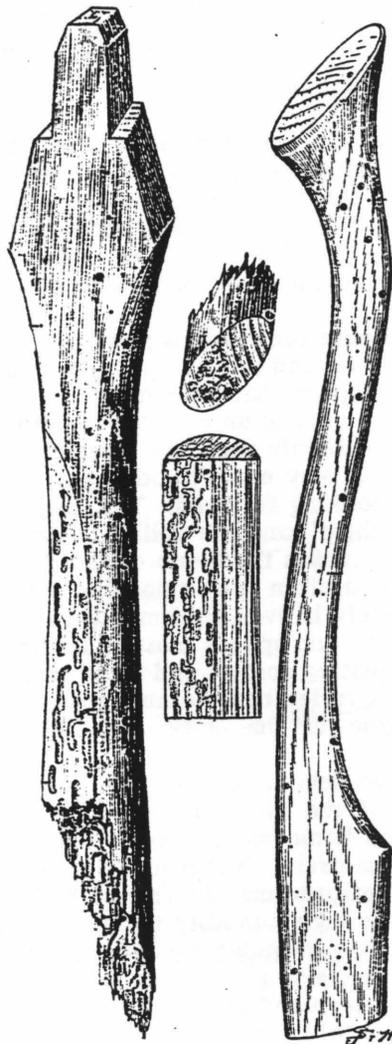
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POWDERPOST BEETLES

There are a variety of beetles that infest and damage structural wood, including furniture, tool handles, and dimension lumber used for building construction. The beetles include the old house borer--which infests seasoned softwoods, and powderpost beetles--which can infest both softwoods and hardwoods.

Lycid powderpost beetles infest hardwoods, such as oak and maple, and are often encountered attacking furniture, household flooring, and even tool handles. These insects can begin as simply a nuisance pest, but can continue to infest/reinfest a piece of wood to the point that they can seriously damage and structurally weaken it. In hardwood flooring they are primarily a cosmetic pests, because they create small round holes and piles of sawdust. They do not usually reinfest hardwood flooring.

Control of powderpost beetles depends on the wood infested and the severity of the infestation. In hardwood floors it may be easy to remove and replace the infested pieces. This may not be possible with infested furniture or other ornamental items. House fumigation is rarely required for the control of these beetles--the infestation must be so severe and widespread that no other method will suffice. Infested wood can be sprayed (or painted on with a brush) with an insecticide that will penetrate the top layer of wood and prevent adult beetles from emerging or reinfesting. These chemicals include Dursban TC, Dragnet FT, and Demon TC, and they can be applied by a professional pest control operator.



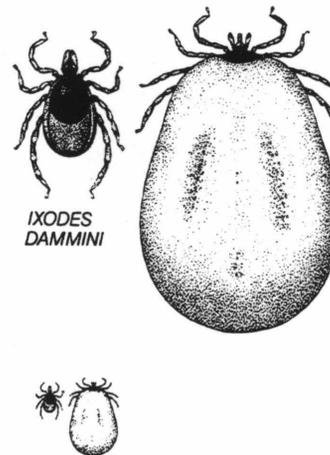
LYME DISEASE UPDATE

This tick-transmitted disease continues to be a serious problem in Virginia. Every year a number of people in this state become exposed to Lyme disease and require medical care. It is certainly not fatal, but sometimes serious. It is difficult to diagnose--which delays successful treatment with antibiotics. Lyme disease (named after a town in Mass. where it was first detected) is a bacterial disease transmitted by several species of ticks that frequent wooded areas in eastern and southern U.S.

The most common tick that can transmit this disease is a small deer tick, *Ixodes dammini*. The deer tick has a two-year life cycle that includes field mice as an intermediate host. During the second year the tick can attach to man, dogs, cats and other small animals for a blood meal--and at that time transfer the disease bacteria. The deer tick, *I. dammini* has been positively identified from Virginia.

Hunters and other individuals that frequent wooded areas should be aware of the potential of being exposed to deer ticks--and to Lyme disease. Insect repellents should be used when walking in wooded areas, and the head, ankles and other parts of the body should be checked carefully. Deer ticks are very small (1/8 inch)--so children must be checked carefully. Ticks should be removed with fine forceps (tweezers) immediately.

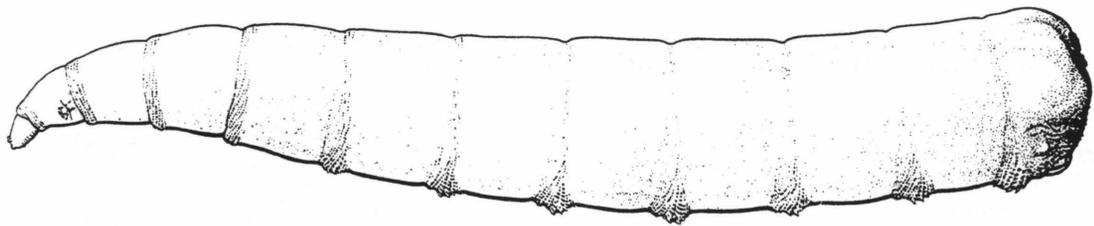
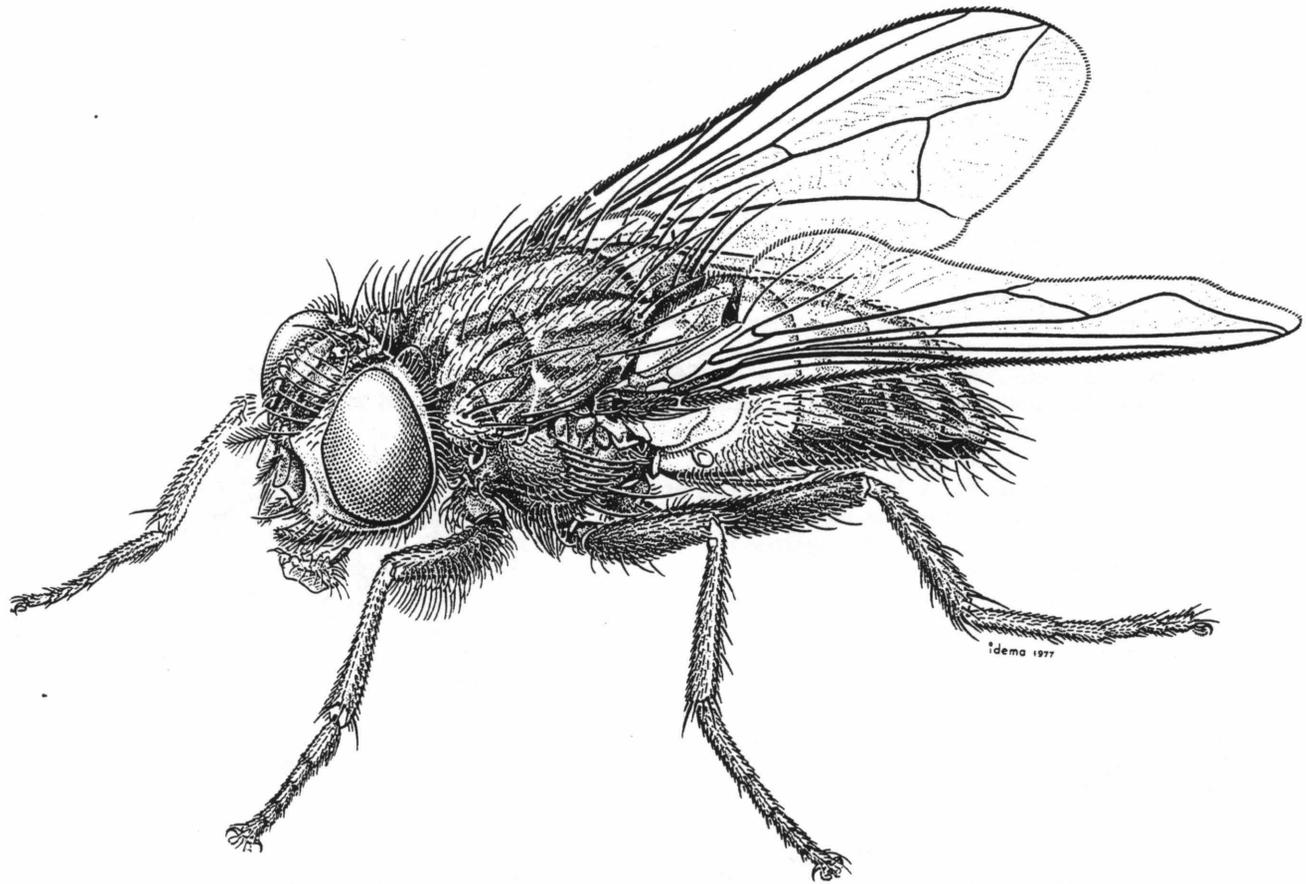
Insect Notes #191, 196, and 201 contain more information on Lyme disease.



FALL AND WINTER HOUSEHOLD PESTS

Silverfish - These small insects are often found in kitchens, bathrooms and attic environments. They are fast moving and generally active at night--so go unnoticed in many houses. The popularity of wallpaper and perhaps some other household items in the ten years has provided for an increase in the presence of silverfish. They feed on material that has a high protein and carbohydrate content (like some wallpaper paste)--but will eat a great variety of things. They can go for long periods without food, so sanitation is not always an effective control strategy. Aerosol sprays can be used to treat areas silverfish have been seen.

Cluster flies - This is the time of year the cluster flies that have entered the house begin buzzing at windows! Prevention is too late (the time for that was August)--now is the time for an aerosol spray or a fly swatter.



HOUSE FLY -- the adult male and immature stage (maggot)