

LW
5655
4761
I57
D. 262



DEPOSITED BY
VIRGINIA STATE LIBRARY

JAN 05 1996

University Libraries
VPI & S.U.

March 17, 1995

No. 262

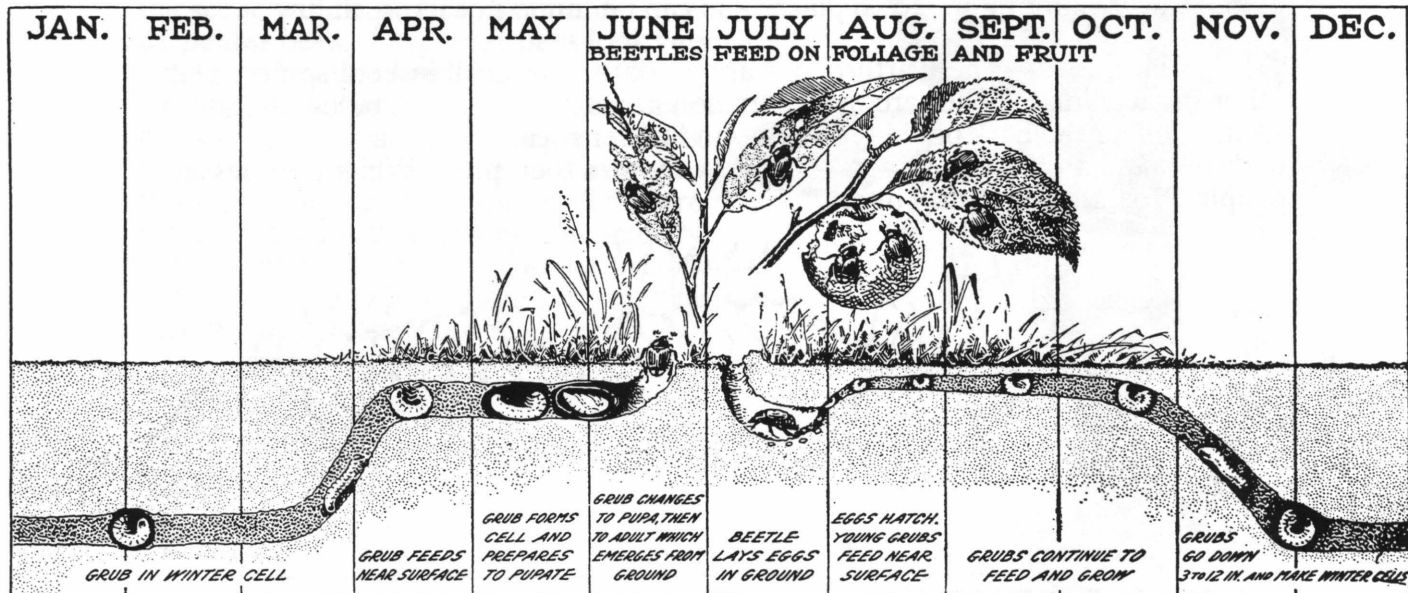


INSECT NOTES

SPRING AND TURF MANAGEMENT

As soon as the weather warms, thoughts and activities often turn to the lawn; spreading a little fertilizer, pulling a few weeds, killing a few insects! Of all the insects that create problems and that severely damage residential turfgrass, white grubs are the most important. There are several major pests in this group, but the Japanese beetle is perhaps the most common in Virginia. This insect damages turfgrass and ornamental plants throughout the state, and controlling this beetle is necessary when populations peak (about every 3-4 years).

In general, the application of insecticides in the spring to control turfgrass insect pests is not such a good idea. The life cycle of Japanese beetles requires about 12 months to complete, and the primary target for insecticide control is the grub stage. The grub stage overwinters 4-5 inches below the ground, and in the early spring it develops into the pupal stage, then into an adult about 30 days later. It is during the spring, when the grub becomes active for a short time, that people want to attempt control. However, this is probably the most difficult time to get an insecticide to this insect. The soil is wet, the grub is not very active (especially in the pupal stage), and the insecticide is not going to remain active all that long!



A much better time to consider controlling white grubs in turfgrass is in early to mid-July. At this time the grubs are small and close to the surface of the soil--easily reached with an insecticide that is applied and watered-in. Avoid the spring-rush to do something about grubs in the lawn, wait for the time when the target pest is most susceptible to your control strategy.

JAPANESE LADYBUGS

It certainly was a banner year (winter) for the pesky Japanese ladybugs--those beetles that showed up a few years ago, and that have been making a pest of themselves ever since. The first confirmed sighting was in Louisiana in 1988, and by now they are in most of the Eastern states.

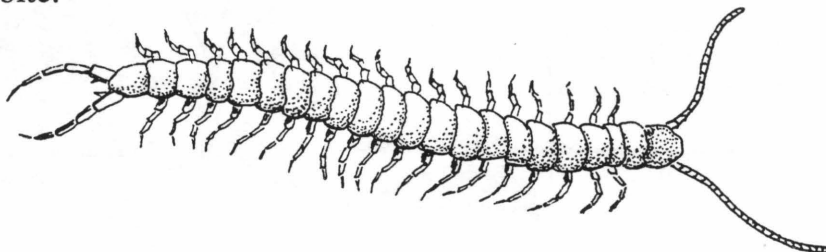
The problem comes with their overwintering habits. Large numbers of adults will collect at protected sites around houses and inside houses. They fly to lights indoors, and can collect at windows on warm and sunny days. A few homeowners have some philosophical problems with the control of ladybugs--after all, they are beneficial (eat aphids) and they have always been depicted as "good bugs". Well, once you get a few trillion of these critters on the side of your house, you can make some quick re-assessments as to just what makes an good bug and a bad bug!

A few things are probably certain--if you have problems with these insects this year, you will probably have the same problems next year (and the year after!); there are probably few mechanical or other nonchemical approaches that will reduce the number of insects that gather around the house. Control of these insects is probably best accomplished in the fall when they gather in large numbers at the overwintering site. A garden insecticide such as carbaryl (Sevin) will be sufficient.

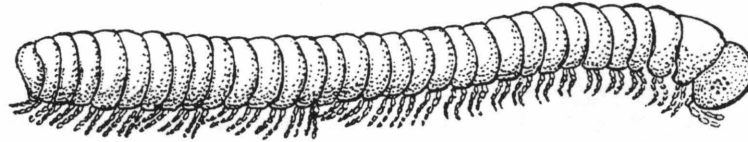
SPRING CREATURES

Digging in the flower garden in the spring, or cleaning up the collected debris from the winter may bring you in contact with a variety of arthropods that prefer damp habitats with decaying vegetation for food and shelter. Some of the most common of these are centipedes, millipedes, sowbugs, and pillbugs. All of these animals overwinter in protected places and can be found in early spring.

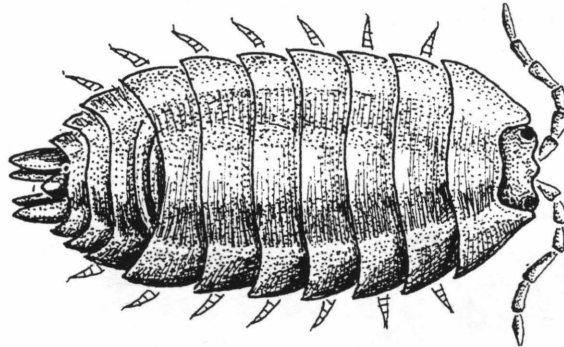
Centipedes - These arthropods are predators on small insects, spiders and other small animals. They are most common in habitats at or just below the soil surface, under the bark of decaying logs, and under rocks. They have one leg per body segment and can move very quickly to capture their prey. While harmless to people, if handled they may bite.



Millipedes - These small arthropods are different from centipedes in that they have two legs per body segment and they feed on decaying organic matter. Millipedes are often found in locations similar to centipedes, but they may occur in large numbers--sometimes in the thousands. Accumulations of grass clippings or leaves may provide food and harborage for large populations of these arthropods. Their pest status is based on numbers and their presence indoors; they do not bite.

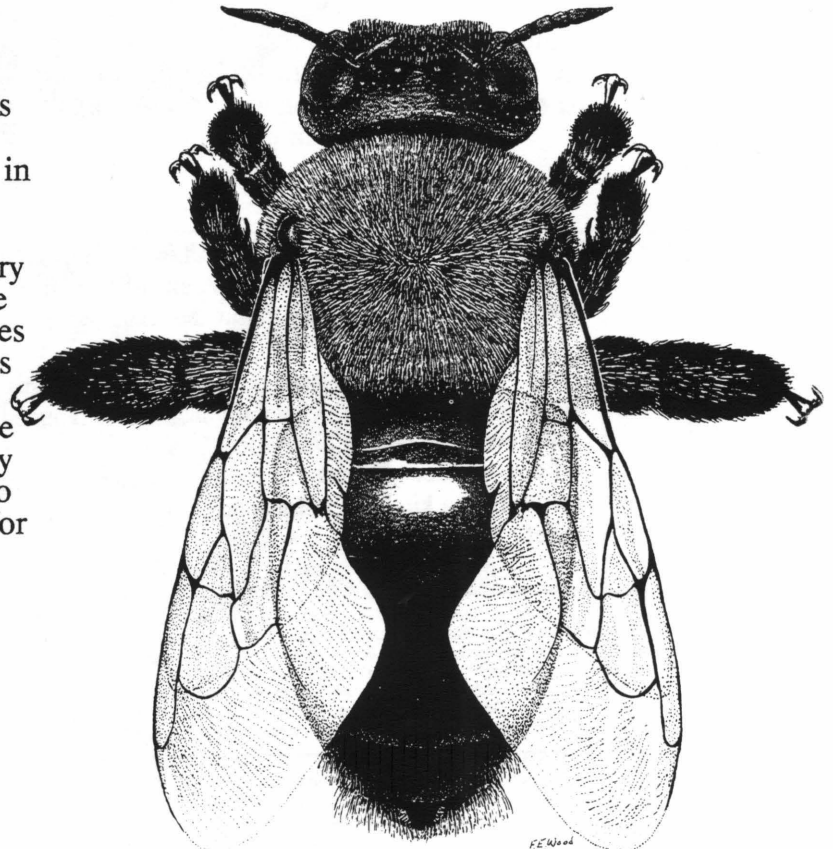


Sowbugs and Pillbugs - These small cousins to crayfish are often found in decaying wood or under boards and stones in wet areas. They feed on decaying organic matter, but rarely occur in large numbers as do millipedes. Pillbugs are known for their ability to roll into a ball when disturbed.



CARPENTER BEES

By now you have seen honey bees working the first flowers on some of the maple trees and other trees and flowers in the yard. The next "bees" to appear on the scene will be bumble bees and carpenter bees. Carpenter bees look very similar to bumble bees, except they have a rather shiny abdomen, and bumble bees have a "fuzzy" abdomen. Carpenter bees are common visitors to the the first flowers blooming in the spring. They are big and perhaps threatening, but actually are very happy to leave you alone and go about their business of gathering food for themselves and their brood.



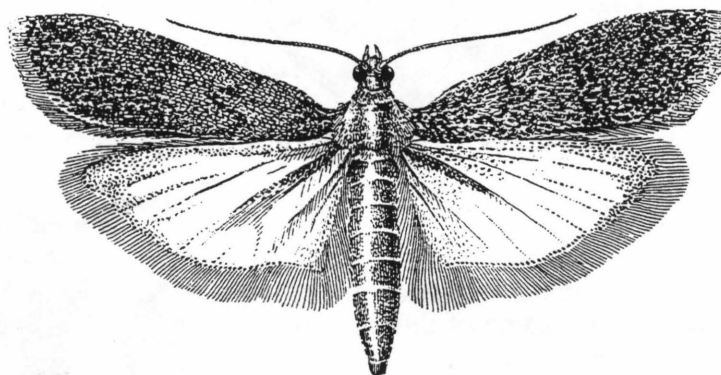
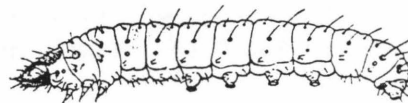
INSECT NOTE:



INDIAN MEAL MOTH

This small moth is one of the most common household insect pests. There seem to be few houses in Virginia that have not had an infestation of this insect at one time or another. Although an infestation of this pest is not serious, and can probably be eliminated easily, it causes concern to homemakers because it often occurs in the kitchen.

The Indian meal moth infests a great variety of stored foods, including flour, meal, dry pet food, nuts, seeds, and a host of other things found in the kitchen cabinet. The adult moths do not eat, but the immature stages--caterpillars--feed and wander about looking for food. Their presence is often indicated by silken webs over the food they infest.



The adult moths are small, with wings that are half dark brown and half pale gray in color. They are easily identified by this half-n-half pattern. The caterpillars are green to a pale pink. They have the habit of crawling about the room--walls, floor, ceiling, etc.--when they are ready to pupate.

Control. The best control measure for this pest is to locate the infested foods and remove them from the house. Clean up around the infested area with a vacuum cleaner and replace the food. Infested material can be "nuked" in a microwave for a short period to kill eggs and larvae of this insect. Of course, then you have to figure how to remove the eggs and caterpillars from the food! Aerosol sprays to the kitchen cabinets are not an effective means of control--and may only provide short-term relief.

Virginia Cooperative Extension programs and employment are open to all, regardless of race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, handicap, or political affiliation. An equal opportunity/affirmative action employer. Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Virginia State University, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture cooperating. William A. Allen, Director, Virginia Cooperative Extension, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg; Lorenza W. Lyons, Administrator, 1890 Extension Program, Virginia State, Petersburg.