



Creepy crawlies here to stay

Rain and warm weather stimulates Portuguese millipede activity as they escape the wet, water-soaked soil in search of a mate and drier ground. It's this search, their attraction to light, and their extraordinary numbers that make them a nuisance to householders and businesses alike. The ultimate uninvited house-guest.

Native to southwest Europe, Portuguese millipedes (*Ommatoiulus moreletii*) arrived in South Australia (SA) in 1953 and despite eradication attempts and extensive research; there remains no practical solution for their total control or eradication from the environment.

When first discovered in Roleystone, Western Australia (WA) in 1986, they were already well established. Now, they're a widespread and common nuisance pest throughout south-west WA and are present in the ACT, NSW, VIC, TAS and SA.

Typically, the outbreaks we encounter are short-lived and associated with autumn and spring rains, and are much less frequently encountered in the cold of winter or the heat of summer.

Most prolific in the first few years after their introduction to a new area, the population will peak in the first few years before declining with time. This is likely due to a parasitic nematode, naturally present in native nematode populations, providing biological control.

Management

When millipede populations are high, employ two or more control methods (cultural, physical, chemical or biological) to reduce their impact and entry into buildings.

Turning off unnecessary outdoor lighting and setting millipede light traps away from the building can reduce their attraction to your home. Placing door seals/dust strips can help prevent their entry. Insecticide barrier sprays around the home and base of walls will also help reduce their numbers and their movement up walls and drain pipes.

More information

See our website: agric.wa.gov.au (search for Portuguese millipedes). **Please note:** The department does not provide control services for this pest and their advice is limited to that displayed on the website. If you do not have internet access, request a copy by calling 1800 084 884.

Report unfamiliar pests

The Pest and Disease Information Service (PaDIS) screens enquiries for new weeds, pests and plant diseases, which could negatively impact the success of WA's local horticulture and agricultural industries and the ability to grow home produce.

To maintain surveillance for new and damaging pests to WA, please take photos, note the location and any damage seen and report via the options below:



Use our free **MyPestGuide™ Reporter app** or MyPestGuide **website**:
mypestguide.agric.wa.gov.au

Email photos and details to info@agric.wa.gov.au **or**

Call 1800 084 881.

Pest and Disease Information Service (PaDIS). info@agric.wa.gov.au. 1800 084 881
Department of Agriculture and Food, WA. 3 Baron-Hay Court, South Perth WA 6151.



Portuguese millipede (*Ommatoiulus moreletii*)



Portuguese millipedes (*Ommatoiulus moreletii*) climbing up walls.