



# Effective Control of Silverfish



March 2003

## Description

This household pest is a nocturnal insect commonly found in attics, basements, bathrooms, wall voids, subfloor areas, and cracks or crevices. The silverfish originated in the tropics, but it has been able to extend its range to temperate countries by dwelling in damp and warm locations. Silverfish, or their eggs, can be unknowingly transported from one area to another in cardboard cartons, books, paper and many other carbohydrate substances. Silverfish are wingless insects that possess a flat and slender, silvery, scale-covered body. They have three long thin antennae and slender appendages at the rear of the body. Silverfish are very long-lived insects that can travel quickly on flat surfaces. They are scavengers and will feed on crumbs, dead insects, starch, glue, paste, and an assortment of paper products. The reproductive cycle of the females varies depending upon their environmental conditions, and their tiny eggs usually take two to six weeks to hatch.

## Sanitation

Sanitation is the first and foremost element of any effective silverfish control program and is most suitable for the control of all crawling insects.

- 1) Vacuum regularly to help remove food particles and insect egg masses.

- 2) Regularly clean around and behind appliances, machinery, countertops, cupboards, drawers and pantries. Also clean beneath sinks and other locations where dark or humid conditions exist.

- 3) Wrap or insulate pipes that have excessive amounts of condensation, repair leaky faucets and pipes, ventilate bathrooms and dehumidify areas of excess moisture.

## Methods of Control

### Physical Control

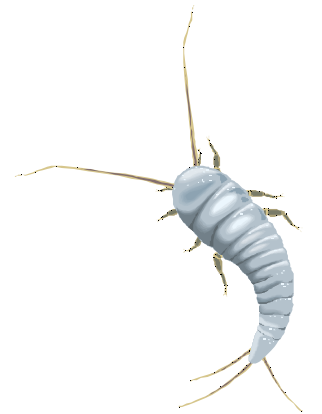
Silverfish can be easily trapped in small glass containers or baby food jars. Wrap the outside of the glass with tape and set the container upright in areas where silverfish have been seen. Silverfish will climb up the taped surface, but they will be trapped in the glass container because they cannot climb smooth surfaces.

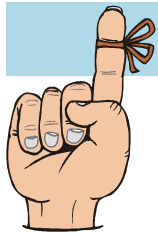
### Chemical Control

Domestic class chemical products available to homeowners for control of silverfish will contain propoxur. These products can be obtained from garden centres or hardware stores. By following the directions for application methods and rates stipulated on the label, these products can be effective in reducing the number of silverfish infesting a household.

Diatomaceous earth, an active ingredient found in pesticide products, is composed of crushed microscopic marine organisms and is an ecological means of control. This powdery dust is much like an abrasive and it acts by removing the waxy coating that normally prevents the insect from losing water. The insect, after coming into contact with the dust, dies from dehydration. Diatomaceous earth can be applied along baseboards and beneath and behind appliances to control crawling insects. It is non-toxic to humans.

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## Remember

### ***Before Purchasing a Pesticide Product***

- Identify the pest correctly.
- Use physical control methods and alternatives to pesticides.
- Read the label directions and safety precautions before buying the product. The label must include the name of the pest to be controlled and the treatment location (e.g., indoor, outdoor, garden uses, pet treatment).
- Purchase only the quantity of product needed for the treatment.
- Alternatively, you may choose to hire a licensed pest control operator.

### ***When Using a Pesticide***

- Carefully read all label instructions and precautions before using pesticides.
- Do not drink, eat or smoke while applying pesticides.
- Persons and pets should vacate the area during treatment. Cover or remove aquaria.
- If kitchen area is to be treated, cover or remove food, dishes and utensils.

### ***After Handling a Pesticide***

- Always wash your hands thoroughly after handling any pesticide product.
- Do not permit persons or pets to contact treated surfaces until residue has dried completely.
- Provide adequate ventilation of treated areas after use.
- Wipe clean all surfaces that come in direct contact with food, such as counters, tables and stovetops, including indoor and outdoor surfaces.
- Always store pesticides out of reach of children and pets and away from food and beverages.

### ***In Case of Accidental Poisoning***

- Call a poison control centre immediately and seek medical attention.
- Take the pesticide container or label with you to the emergency facility or physician.
- Follow first aid statements on the label.
- In case of accidental poisoning of pets seek veterinary attention immediately.



### ***When Disposing of Pesticides***

Do not reuse empty pesticide containers. Wrap and dispose of in household garbage.

Unused or partially used pesticide products should be disposed of at provincially or municipally designated household hazardous waste disposal sites.

### ***Use Common Sense***

- These are general recommendations.
- Consult the label for specific instructions.
- When in doubt, contact a professional.

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**Ottawa ON K1A 0K9**

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**Telephone: 1-800-267-6315**  
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