

SILVERFISH – Control Advice

Description

Silverfish are small insects about a centimetre long, silver-grey in colour and torpedo shaped. They have long antennae, no wings and prefer the dark. When disturbed they make short darting movements. They normally live outdoors where they like moist places. Indoors they are usually found in moist areas such as kitchens and bathrooms. They need high humidity to breed and multiply and eat damp wallpaper, moulds, fabrics and starchy foods and are harmless to humans.

Control measures

Since silverfish prefer moist conditions, curing structural dampness within a building will help make a home unattractive to them (look for evidence of roof leaks, plumbing leaks or condensation problems). Improving room conditions by removing warm moist air by airing and ventilation will also help, as will removing old stacks of newspapers, old books, boxes and fabrics. Infested clothing that needs to be kept should be washed or dry cleaned. Affected books etc can be wrapped tightly in plastic and placed in a large freezer for at least 4 hours to kill the insects.

In addition, a residual insecticide can be purchased from a chemist or garden centre. Choose one which says on the label that it is suitable for crawling insects including silverfish. Apply the insecticide under the edges of carpets, along skirting boards around the perimeter of a room and under the base of sink units and cupboards etc. (be careful to follow the product instructions carefully).

This information is provided for advice only. The council does not provide a pest control service to deal with silverfish, since the remedy ultimately depends on treating the source of the dampness that allows these creatures to survive inside homes.