



House Centipede
Mephitis mephitis



Help!!!!!! I saw a giant bug with a thousand legs in my bathroom. What is it? And when can you get here? We receive calls of this nature on a regular basis caused by this culprit, the House Centipede. Despite its creepy appearance the House Centipede is actually considered to be beneficial. It is predacious, feeding on insects and spiders and uses the first pair of legs which are modified into poison pinchers (toxignaths) to catch its prey.

They are 1" 1 -1/2" long grayish yellow in color with 3 dark stripes located down the back. Contrary to popular belief they only possess 15 pairs of legs not one thousand. These speed demons have been clocked traveling 420 mm/sec 33mm stride. The lifespan of most species is about 1 year however some may live 5 to 6 years.

A moist environment is required for these fierce looking arthropods to survive. Indoors they can be found in basements, crawlspaces and bathrooms. Outdoors they can be found in firewood, trash, leaf litter, compost and mulch. It is the only species of centipede that will live its entire life inside. A dehumidifier can be used to dry out damp basements and crawlspaces. Stored items and clutter should also be reduced. At EHS we believe the keys to a successful House Centipede management program are low impact applications in conjunction with moisture reduction and harborage removal.

Please contact us with questions or to schedule an inspection.