

# Woodlice

## Biology

Woodlice (Isopoda) are crustaceans and have a broad, oval to long shape. Their size varies from animals of 3 mm to animals of up to 20 mm large pillbugs (*Armadillidium* sp.), scabby slaters (*Porcellio scaber* Latr.) and dooryard sowbugs (*Oniscus asellus* L.). Most woodlice are plain grey, pillbugs can also be black to brown-black, all of their bodies have seven pairs of legs. They love dark, humid and warm habitats. During the day they hide in pots, under moss, in substrates or similar safe places. Their preferred food is dead plant material, occasionally and in cases of high population density, they also feed on young, fresh plant material.

## Damage

The pattern of damage is similar to that of snails, but without the slimy traces. They mainly damage young, fresh plant parts, usually gnawing seedlings, aerial roots or root tips. But flower stalks can be damaged, too. Considerable damage may also be caused to the structure of the substrates.

## Control

Using clean substrates with stable structure prevents infestation. The removal of hiding places in greenhouses can also be a good thing to do. Direct control with chemicals is not very successful, the most effective products are Methiocarb-containing baits which are used against snails as well.

## Biological plant protection

Watering the plants with insect-pathogenic nematodes (*Steinernema feltiae*) can be effective against the grubs of the pests. Use them twice with a period of 4-6 weeks in between to reduce the pest.

Animal pests

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Woodlouse on substrate

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