

# EARWIGS

Earwigs are beetle-like, short-winged, fast moving insects about ½ inch to 1 inch in length. They are usually dark brown and have a pair of pincher-like appendages at the end of their body. Earwigs have chewing-type mouthparts. They are omnivorous in their feeding habits, eating both plant and animal material. Earwigs may occur as a minor nuisance in gardens or greenhouses where they will nibble on succulent plants such as lettuce. They are also documented to feed on root tubers of radish, potato, sweet potato, and the pods of peanuts, though all feeding is of little consequence. More importantly, earwigs are voracious predators of diverse prey such as caterpillars, aphids, mites, scales, beetle larvae, leafhoppers, and sowbugs. This predatory behavior offsets the small amount of damage done to plants.

Earwigs are nocturnal, hiding during the day and roaming at night to find food and water. Because of their nighttime activity, they remain in the soil or under debris during the day. Heavily thatched lawns or mulched flowerbeds are among their preferred daytime habitats. They search for food at night around streetlights, neon lights, lighted windows, or similar locations. While they are chiefly an "outdoor insect," their habit of hiding among plants allows them to be frequently brought into the home.

Earwigs rarely warrant suppression and are easily killed by most residual insecticides (even if you didn't mean to kill the earwigs). Parasitic flies, insect killing fungi as well as cannibalism account for mortality factors. If these pests become a serious nuisance indoors, elimination of hiding places, food material, and moisture sources will reduce the infestation. Be sure to check potted plants for pest activity before bringing them indoors. A large indoor population of these pests indicates that a large number is also surrounding the structure. Compost piles and decaying vegetation should be removed from areas close to the house. Mulch should be only 2-4 inches deep so it remains dry most of the time. Earwigs can be caught in pitfall traps such as jars or tin cans, buried at ground level. Earwigs cannot easily climb the sides of the container and are usually trapped. The trapped earwigs can be destroyed or moved to a more desirable location.



SIZE



Up to 1 inch

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[http://www.entnemdept.ufl.edu/creatures/veg/european\\_earwig.htm](http://www.entnemdept.ufl.edu/creatures/veg/european_earwig.htm)

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