



BARKLICE

Barklice and booklice are common names of insects called psocids (pronounced: so-sids). Psocids are insects found throughout the world living in damp, secluded areas. Outdoors, psocids live in leaf litter, decaying wood, and on tree bark; hence one of their common names barklice. Indoors psocids will be commonly found in areas where paper products are stored, such as bookshelves, basements, and attics. Booklice are harmless, causing no real damage to structures or household goods and posing no public health hazard. On rare occasions psocids can infest dried foods, especially cereals.

Psocids are small (1/4 inch or less), drab colored insects. Outdoor species are generally dark-brown or gray with well developed wings. Indoor species are pale gray or white, frequently with vestigial wings or no wings. Psocids may be mistaken for worker termites. Because of their small size, it is best to have an experienced Pest Control operator or Extension Agent make a positive identification.

Psocids are soft-bodied insects which undergo a simple metamorphosis, so immature forms closely resemble adults. Developmental time from egg to adult is three to four weeks. Psocids overwinter as eggs or nymphs. Many psocids are parthenogenetic, reproducing without mating first.

Outdoors psocids feed on fungi, bacteria, lichens, and insect fragments. Indoor species tend to congregate and infest paper products such as books, boxes and fiberboard. Certain fungi grow on these materials which will support large populations of psocids.

CONTROL

Control of outdoor psocids is not necessary unless populations build up to nuisance level. If large numbers show up on ornamentals, wash them off with a garden hose. Use chemical sprays only as a last resort. Foundation sprays may be applied to help prevent movement indoors.

If psocids are regular nuisance, their numbers can be reduced by changing plantings or outdoor sanitation. Remove weeds and ground clutter under plantings. Prune and trim shrubs to encourage aeration. Rake away leaf litter from buildings.

To reduce indoor infestations, remove infested paper products. Books should be dried thoroughly to eliminate any remaining infestation. Clean and ventilate the area to promote dry conditions. If large numbers of psocids are present, an aerosol bomb or a household residual insecticide can be used. Aerosols will give quick knock-downs. Non-aerosol residual sprays will protect treated surfaces for a few weeks. Follow label directions carefully. Use caution when spraying finished wood, plastic, or dyed cloth.

ALL PESTICIDES listed in this publication are registered and cleared for suggested uses according to Federal registration and State laws and regulations in effect on the date of this publication. When trade names are used for identification, no product endorsement is implied, nor is discrimination intended against similar materials.



WARNING! Pesticides are poisonous. Read and follow all directions and safety precautions on labels. Handle carefully and store in original labeled containers out of reach of children, pets or livestock. Dispose of empty containers immediately, in a safe manner and place. Do not contaminate forage, streams, and ponds. Pesticides should never be stored with foods.

NOTICE: The user of this information assumes all risks for personal injury or property damage.

Updated -- 2010