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Springtail Order: Collembola



GENERAL INFORMATION

Springtails are classified in the order Collembola. They are most commonly found in soil, but can also be found in leaf litter, logs, dung, caves, shorelines, water surfaces etc. There are many species, and they have worldwide distribution. They are sometimes referred as "snow fleas" for their ability to survive severely cold temperatures, and are sometimes mistaken for fleas indoors because of their small size and their ability to propel through the air or "jump." The difference is that fleas use hind legs to jump, and springtails use their forked "tail" or furcula to propel themselves.

SIGNS OF INFESTATION

The presence of adults and immature springtails is a sign of infestation. Springtails usually infest areas that are dark, damp and humid.

FOOD SOURCES

decaying plant material, bacteria, mold, mold spores. One source states that rarely some species will eat dead animal material and live plants.

LIFE CYCLE

They undergo incomplete metamorphosis egg-nymph-adult, maintaining the same basic body shape but growing in size. They continue to molt throughout their adult life.



DIAGNOSTIC MORPHOLOGY

Adults:

- 2.0 to 12.0 mm long
- Range of color varies from whitish, yellowish, gray to black
- Wingless with segmented antennae
- Most species have elongated bodies, but some have globose bodies.
- Forked structure (furcula) located on the ventral side of the fourth abdominal segment
- Springtails can leap 75 to 100 mm using furcula
- Sexes look alike



Immature Stage:

- They undergo incomplete metamorphosis egg-nymph-adult, maintaining the same basic body shape but change in color and grow in size.



CONTROL & TREATMENT

Physical removal, as well as locating the source of the infestation: clean the infested area to remove any possible mold and debris, use dehumidifiers and fans to dry damp spaces, and make sure humidity levels remain low and constant. Springtails in general seem resistant to most pesticides.

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Fact Sheet: Springtail

Photo of three springtails credit: Samuel Abbott, Utah State University

Photo of two springtails credit: North Star Pest Control(<http://www.northstarpestcontrol.biz/images/CI.springtail.jpg>)

Photo of single springtail: Texas A&M University, Entomology Department (

Information:

Mallis, A., et al. (2011), Handbook of Pest Control - Tenth Edition, Mallis Handbook LLC, 1227-1229

<http://www.ext.colostate.edu/pubs/insect/05602.html>

<http://www.buglife.org.uk/discoverbugs/knowledge/typesofinvertebratesbyhabitat/terrestrial/springtails>

<http://eol.org/pages/336/details>