

Have you noticed any interesting critters in your bin and you are not quite sure if they are good or not? Some of them make life easier for their wormy comrades while others are just complete nuisances. Here are some easy fixes to get rid of some of the more persistent pests.



The Good, the Bad and the Ugly

Helpers: keep them!

Sow bugs: This crustacean has a rigid, segmented shell-like exoskeleton and is capable of rolling up into a tight ball. They feed on dead or decaying plants while aerating the soil in the process.



Millipedes: These elongated insects have a cylindrical or flattened body with two pairs of legs on each segment. Although they move slowly, they are very helpful by eating decaying leaves. They can be damaging to new seedlings though and are therefore considered pests in the garden. Not to be confused with harmful centipedes!



Springtails: These insects are most abundant in bins except they do not have wings. Springtails have a tail-like feature which allows them to jump when they feel threatened by a predator! These critters are beneficial in compost as they chow down on fungi and other damp vegetation, helping to return nutrients to the soil after feeding.



Hinderers: get rid of them!

Fruit flies: These are those tiny, pesky bugs that fly out of the bin when you open the lid. Exposed food attracts them so cover food scraps with bedding. Follow this and you will no longer have a bin full of flies. Freezing any food, before letting the worms eat it, destroys any fruit fly eggs. You could also set up a trap with a piece of rotten fruit in plastic cup covered with film of plastic with small holes to trap them.



Centipedes: These elongated flat creatures have one pair of legs per segment. Centipedes will eat your worms for lunch and their venomous claws are capable of killing or paralyzing prey. So if you are trying to remove them, beware the sting!



Mites: All composts contain mites and in large numbers, they can be very stressful for your worms. These critters are reddish-brown and are attracted to very moist bins with many vegetables. Some may attach to your worm friends and suck their blood! To catch - place a slice of bread or melon into the bin. The next day it should be covered with mites: remove it and repeat until no more mites are found on the food. Your worms will thank you!



Send any questions, art or inquiries to:
The Worm Lady c/o R.E.A.P.S Box 444 Prince George, BC V2L 4S6
Ph: 250-561-7327 or email: thewormlady@reaps.org