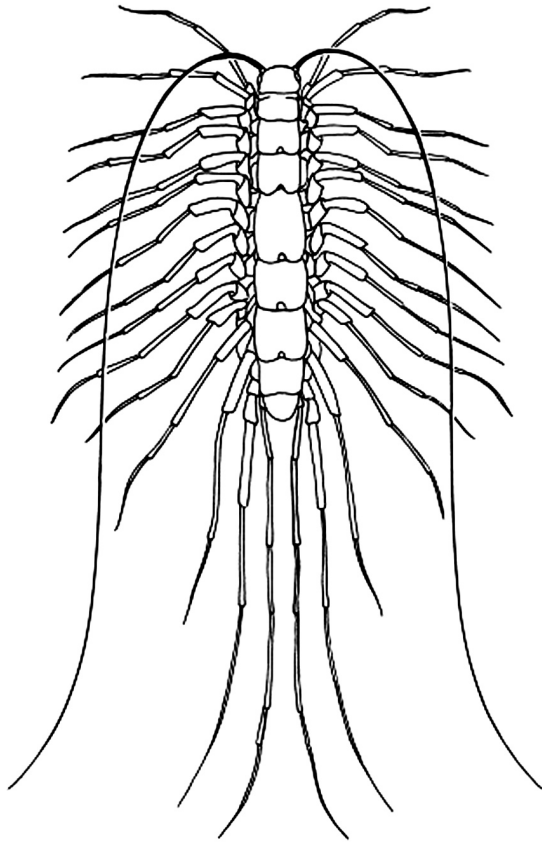




House Centipedes



House Centipedes are odd-looking creatures, with a short, somewhat worm-like body, round head and many long slender appendages. They have 15 pairs of legs arranged along the sides of the body, one pair of long slender antennae extending from the head, and an equally long pair of appendages extending from the end of the body, which gives them the appearance of a walking dust mop. The

body itself is roughly 1 in. long and striped in browns and whitish colors. The legs are also banded. There are some species of House Centipedes, genus *Scutigera*, in Central and South America that are a distinctive purplish blue color.

House centipedes apparently originated in Mexico but have now spread throughout the United States. They occur outdoors and indoors, particularly in damp areas. In homes they may be found in damp cellars and closets or in bathrooms.

House Centipedes are very fast and can be seen darting across floors and walls. They will occasionally stop and remain motionless before darting away, often directly toward people observing them, presumably seeking shelter beneath them. Centipedes have no interest in biting humans, and will only do so when physically threatened. These centipedes are solitary predators, feeding on insects and spiders, particularly silverfish.

The presence of House Centipedes generally indicates the presence of large numbers of insects, like silverfish. They are effective predators and should be left alone. Eliminating their prey, most particularly silverfish, can eliminate these centipedes, which is easier said than done. In general, House Centipedes are considered beneficial creatures because they are predators of several pest species.

Despite their size and speed, House Centipedes have small weak jaws and can only penetrate human skin with great difficulty. On the occasion that they do manage to bite the bite can result in some pain and swelling, but is never any worse than a bee sting.