Springtails Identification and Biology

By DoMyOwn staff

Physical Appearance

Springtails are tiny insects that many people mistake for fleas because of their ability to "hop" or "jump" about. This tiny bug (1/16 to 1/8 inch) is most often black, wingless, and has a distinctive head and humpback appearance. The springtail has a fork-like attachment underneath its abdomen which acts like a spring to propel the insect into the air. Springtails may appear in very large numbers in summer and spring as "piles of soot" in backyards, driveways, or mud puddles.

Behavior & Habitat

The presence of springtails is associated with fungi, mold, and moisture. Outdoors, springtails thrive underneath decaying wood and bark, in piles of leaf litter, and among wet soil and plant material. In homes, large numbers of springtails may appear seemingly out of nowhere and swarm in puddles, around moldy floor drains, and in damp basements. Springtails move rapidly by crawling or jumping. They are unable to survive in dry conditions.

Feeding Habits

Springtails are considered scavengers and they will feed on fungi, molds, algae, and decaying plants.

Damage

Other than being a bother by their presence, springtails do not pose any real threat to humans. They do not bite or sting, nor do they carry diseases. They also do no eat human food.

General Prevention & Control :

- Removal of leaf litter and other piles of organic or decaying material will eliminate outdoor breeding sites near the home.
- Masses of springtails found outdoors may be dispersed with hose water.
- Indoors, the best control is to improve ventilation and fix any leaks causing moldy conditions, and to keep the premises as dry as possible. Springtails cannot survive in dry conditions.
- A residual pesticide such as **Suspend** or **Demand** may be sprayed with a **low-pressure sprayer** around baseboards and other problem areas to eliminate present infestations, but the springtails will likely return when the pesticide wears off if the conditions that attract them are not corrected.

For more detailed information on Springtail prevention and control, see **How To Get Rid of Springtails**

View all Springtail Control products