

MEDIA STATEMENT



Tuesday, 12 April 2016

Nuisance millipedes pose no harm

Portuguese millipedes are on the march but residents are being assured they pose no harm to humans or animals despite a noticeable increase in reported numbers recently.

The millipedes are most common in autumn and spring, however, homeowners can control their numbers through a variety of environmental controls.

This includes reducing organic matter around the garden, turning off external lights and also installing physical barriers. Chemical treatments are also available.

Team Leader Sustainability and Environmental Planning Ben Deeley said the management of the millipede population by individual homeowners was the most effective means of controlling their numbers. The City of Bunbury's local laws do not cover the control of Portuguese millipedes.

"These millipedes are attracted to light and can find their way indoors in nuisance numbers at the height of their population boom," Mr Deeley said.

"They are now widespread and common throughout the South West and Perth metropolitan area."

Gardens are their preferred habitat and they play a beneficial role in breaking down organic matter and aerating the soil.

Portuguese millipedes were first found in WA in the late 1980s. They are usually around 20-45mm in length, are grey to black in colour and tend to curl up in a spiral when disturbed.

Their numbers are expected to drop off in winter.

Further information about the control of Portuguese millipedes is available from the Department of Agriculture website - www.agric.wa.gov.au

ENDS

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