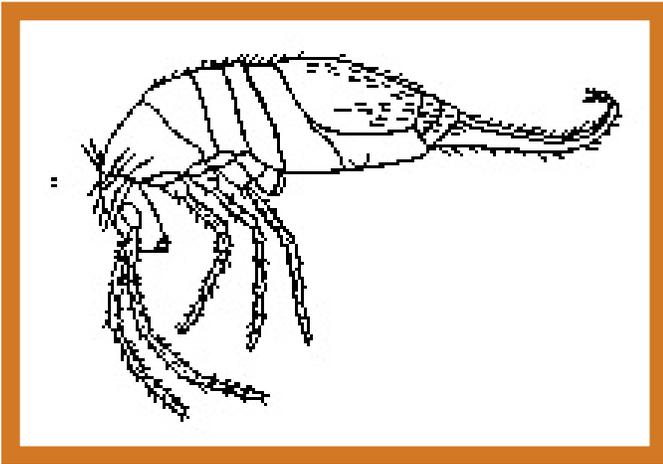


# Springtails (Collembola)



## Identification

Springtails are very small insects (1-2mm), whitish or grayish in color. They have a distinctive head with long antennae and a 'humpbacked' appearance.

Springtails can be found wherever it is dark and wet. Indoors, they often infest basements, bathroom and kitchen sinks, bathtubs, and floor drains. They may also be found in potted plants or terrariums.

Outdoors, springtails live in damp soil, such as under rotting logs or boards or in wet leaf litter. They may be seen on the surface of standing water such as swimming pools.

Springtails do not fly, but may jump or spring several inches. They do not bite or transmit disease to humans. Most species do not cause damage to plants or property, but may cause annoyance, particularly when they occur in large numbers.

Springtails only live in damp environments. When it becomes too dry outdoors, they will seek damp indoor environments and may multiply rapidly.

## Springtail or Flea?

**Springtails and fleas are both tiny insects that jump, but that's where the resemblance ends. A flea's body is brown, flatted from side to side, and are very difficult to crush. Springtails have a lighter-colored, softer, more rounded body. More importantly, while fleas bite humans, springtails are harmless and do not bite. If you're still not sure whether you're having a problem with springtails or fleas, bring a sample to the District office for identification.**





### Outdoor Prevention Options

- Reduce watering around mulch and bark
- Dry out wet soil and wood
- Trim overgrown vegetation around swimming pools
- Remove decaying leaves
- Dry out moist areas around and under structures

### Indoor Prevention Options

- Keep kitchens and bathrooms free of mildew and mold
- Dry out potted plants between watering
- Repair water leaks and drips from plumbing
- Keep attics and crawl spaces well-ventilated
- Use good ventilation and sunlight, fans, artificial heat, or a dehumidifier to reduce relative humidity

### Chemical Control

Outdoor springtail populations may be treated with insecticides such as diazinon or chlorpyrifos. Insecticides should only be used when population levels are high and areas cannot be completely dried out. Always use insecticides according to the label instructions.

### How We Can Help

The District does not provide chemical control for springtails. For chemical control, please contact a licensed pest control operator.

The District laboratory may be able to identify springtail samples. Please bring samples to the District office in a sealed bag or vial.

## San Mateo County Mosquito and Vector Control District

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Burlingame, CA 94010

Monday-Friday  
8a.m. to 4:30p.m.

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