

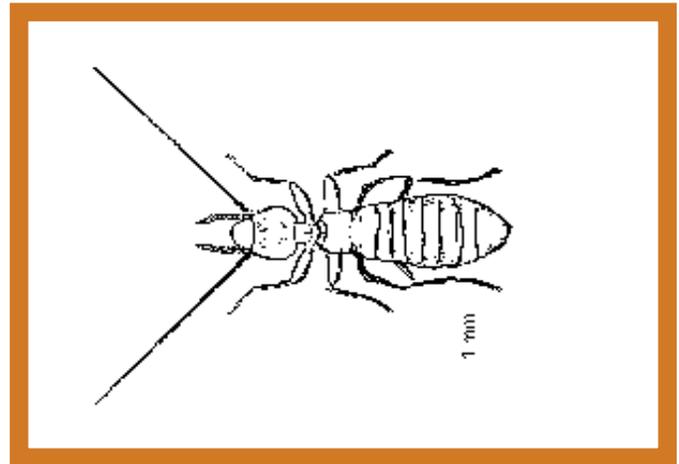
Book Lice (Psocids)

About Book Lice

Book lice (Psocids) are NOT true lice; they do not bite or sting and cannot transmit disease. Although they may be a nuisance when present in large numbers, they cause very little actual damage to property.

Adult book lice are 1-2mm long, gray to light brown in color. They have short or no wings, segmented antennae, and six legs. They are most commonly found outdoors in damp locations, such as under tree bark. Indoors, book lice are found in warm, damp places such as cupboards, behind moldings and baseboards, in wall voids, alongside windows, and in electrical outlets.

Book lice eat fungus, including the microscopic mold that grows on book bindings, wallpapers, and stored starchy foods such as cereals and grains. Book lice become most numerous indoors in spring and summer months.



Preventing Book Lice Infestation

Book lice may be brought into your home on boxes, books, papers, and furniture. Ensuring these items are dry will help prevent infestation. Even microscopic amounts of mold may provide enough food for book lice to survive.

- Keep storage areas clean, dry, and well-ventilated.
- Promptly repair any leaks or drips in plumbing.
- Store books and papers in dry areas
- Keep starchy foods in closed containers with tight-fitting lids, or freeze for long-term storage





Control Options

Book lice survive in damp environments where they find mold and fungus to feed on, so it is important to thoroughly dry out all infested areas.

Good ventilation and sunlight, fans, artificial heat, or a dehumidifier should be used to reduce relative humidity, preferably to less than 50%. If the book lice are coming from furniture cushions or another object, drying out or fumigating the article is suggested.

It is important to remove infested boxes, cardboard, and other paper from damp storage areas. Infested food items should be discarded. Infested books or other valuables should be thoroughly dried. If areas or objects remain damp, future re-infestations are likely.

It is not necessary to use

insecticides to eliminate book lice infestations. However, aerosol insect sprays containing pyrethrins or synthetic pyrethroids (Allethrin, Resmethrin, etc.) may be used to control book lice populations indoors when areas or articles cannot be completely dried.

Never use aerosols near electric motors, gas pilot flames, or other places where they may create a fire hazard. Always follow label directions when using insecticides.

How We Can Help

The District does not provide chemical control for book lice. Our laboratory may be able to identify Psocid samples or suspected Psocid samples brought to the District office in a sealed bag or vial.

San Mateo County Mosquito and Vector Control District

(650) 344 - 8592
1351 Rollins Road
Burlingame, CA 94010

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

www.smcmvcd.org

