

Pest Profile



Photo credit: [David Cappaert](#), Bugwood.org

Common Name: Sowbug

Synonyms: Pillbug, roly-poly, doodlebug, wood bug, leg pebbles, woodlouse

Scientific Name: *Armadillidium sp.*

Order and Family: Isopoda: Armadillidiidae

Size and Appearance:

	Length (mm)	Appearance
Egg		Tiny and white. Kept under female's body in a "marsupium" (water-filled sac). Eggs hatch and stay inside the pouch for a few weeks and then disperse.
Larva/Nymph	Varies over 10+ molts	Smaller version of adults, development to adulthood takes 2 years.
Adult	6-12mm	Dark grey/black, oval shaped, armored segmented appearance, seven pairs of short and jointed legs, two short antennae. Though the terms "pillbug" and "sowbug" are often used interchangeably, "pillbug" correctly refers to the species that roll up into a tight ball, "sowbug" describes the species that are physically incapable of rolling into a ball.
Pupa (if applicable)		

Type of feeder (Chewing, sucking, etc.): Chewing

Host plant/s: Decaying organic material, young seedlings in rare cases, typically inhabit moist areas.

Description of Damage (larvae and adults): Sowbugs are not major nuisance pests, as they mostly feed on decaying material. Both pillbugs and sowbugs breathe through gills on the underside of their bodies which must be kept wet, attracting them to damp habitats. When populations become large enough, they will venture out to feeding on young seedling leaves. Their damage is from chewing rough looking holes between leaf veins.

References:

Bechinski, E., & Merickel, F. (2009). Homeowner guide to pillbugs and sowbugs. *University of Idaho Extension*. Retrieved from <http://extension.uidaho.edu/clearwater/files/2014/11/Homeowner-Guide-to-Pillbugs-and-Sowbugs.pdf>

Benson, E., Scott, J., & Zungoli, P. (2001). Sowbugs and pillbugs. *Clemson Cooperative Extension: Entomology Insect Information Series*.