

Pest Profile



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Common Name: Silverfish

Scientific Name: *Lepisma saccharina*

Order and Family: Thysanura: Lepismatidae

Size and Appearance: Silverfish are known by their carrot-shaped body, and 3 long bristle-like tails. Adults are about 18 mm long and are wingless with silver colored bodies. Their namesake comes from the fact their scales give off a silvery “sheen” when in direct light.

| | Length (mm) | Appearance |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|--|
| Egg | < 0.1 mm | Females lay 1-3 per day in cracks, under household objects, or in the open. Needs at least 50% humidity to hatch. |
| Larva/Nymph | 1-15 mm | Nymphs resemble adults and must go through 3 to 4 molts to reach sexual maturity. Scales appear during 3 rd or 4 th molt. |
| Adult | 15-18 mm | Adults are gray in color with a silver “sheen” to their scales. They feature long antennae and 3 distinct bristle-like tails on posterior region. Compound eyes. |
| Pupa (if applicable) | | |

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

Host/s: *Lepisma saccharina* prefers humid environments, so it will often be found in bathrooms, basements, and potted plants. They have a fondness for glazed paper products, wallpaper, wallpaper paste, gummed labels, and bindings of books.

Description of Damage (larvae and adults): Damage will appear as irregular markings on books and paper documents. They may leave holes, notches along an edge, or etchings on the surface. They can also cause yellow staining as well as leave behind black pepper sized feces or silver scales.

References:

Smith, E.H. and Whitman, R.C. (2007). Fabric and Paper Pests- Silverfish. In *NPMA Field Guide of Structural Pests*. (5.11.2). National Pest Management Association International.

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