



Striped Millipedes at the Bay Campus

Advice for students and staff



What are Striped Millipedes?

The striped millipede, *Ommatoiulus sabulosus*, at a whopping 3cm long, is Britain's largest millipede, and with two bronze coloured stripes along its back, is easily recognised.

Where does it live?

It is found in large numbers in the dunes of Crymlyn Burrows and every May it disperses far and wide looking for breeding sites. It is the only millipede active by day but during sunny weather is at risk of dehydration so has to find shelter. On the beach thousands may be found sheltering under driftwood but on campus this often leads to them entering buildings and into contact with people.

Why are they indoors?

It can climb well and is able to enter tiny gaps in buildings, with the buildings bordering the dunes being the ones most likely to be affected, especially Engineering East and the Library. It is almost impossible to prevent them entering, they will come in through ventilation gaps, under doors and through windows. Although harmless, they can cause concern for people, especially if they are in large numbers such as when cool, damp conditions are followed by hot sunshine.

Don't panic, it is a harmless soul!

Like most millipedes, *O.sabulosus* can secrete a foul-tasting liquid when disturbed, but is otherwise harmless. It cannot bite or sting and is a gentle detritivore, living on decaying wood and other plant material.

What should you do?

The best approach is to use a dustpan and brush to gently collect them and release them outside away from the building in an area of shady vegetation. More will probably return, but this can be repeated. By June the bulk of the movement will have come to an end and little will be seen of these creatures until next spring... in the meantime, enjoy the wonder of our diverse life on campus.

