

15.1 SILVERFISH

It is also known as **Fish moth**.

Scientific Name: *Lepisma saccharina* Linnaeus
Family: Lepismatidae
Order: Thysanura

Status: Minor household pest.

Distribution: Averagely distributed all over the world.

Food: Found in hot and moist parts of the house such as basement especially in old books and magazines.

DESCRIPTION OF STAGES

Adult: Silverfish is carrot shaped, slender, soft-bodied, pearl-white, wingless insect covered with silvery scales. The body tapers very markedly from head to tail. There are three caudal filaments. It measures about 13 mm in length.

Egg: Whitish, oval, deposited loosely, hatch in one to many weeks depending upon the season, incubation period varies from 6 to 10 days.

Young ones: The young ones closely resemble the adults except in size. They are whitish miniatures and grow slowly for 9 months.

LIFE HISTORY

The pest is active throughout the year in the warmer climate. All stages may be found throughout the year. The number of generations may vary according to temperature and humidity of a locality. In warm and damp places the female lays a few whitish oval eggs. Their incubation period is 6 to 10 days. The development is slow and includes a number of moultings. The insect reaches maturity in 7 to 9 months. There are many overlapping generations.

MODE OF DAMAGE

Its damage is not severe in most cases. It causes nuisance by feeding on glue and starchy materials with its chewing mouthparts. It may eat book bindings, paper, wall paper, fabrics, starched

clothes, etc. They also cause damage in libraries and certain fabrics.



Lepisma saccharina Linnaeus
(Lepismatidae: Thysanura)

NON-CHEMICAL CONTROL

1. Regular cleaning and ventilation of places can reduce its population.
2. Sealing of cracks and crevices can also minimise its attack.

CHEMICAL CONTROL

1. Placing poisoned glue pasted on small pieces of cardboard among books as bait is effective method for its control. Bait may be prepared by mixing:

i. Wheat flour	200 parts
ii. chlorpyrifos	16 parts,
iii. Powdered sugar	10 parts
iv. Powdered common salt	5 parts.
2. Spray malathion or dichlorvos in lower concentrations for the control of this pest.
3. Synthetic pyrethroids can be used in 0.1 to 0.5% concentrations (permethrin / cypermethrin etc.) as dust, mats, coils and aerosol sprays.
4. Naphthalene balls may also be used by keeping them in the boxes.