

Wood bug information

Their body structure: They have a segmented exoskeleton, two antennae and 14 legs.

Where they live: on land in moist areas, often under decaying logs or leaves.

What they eat: They're mainly scavengers, eating decaying plants and small animals. But occasionally they will eat living plants too.

What eats them: They're prey for a variety of larger insectivorous animals.

They are crustacean, related to shrimp.

Wood bugs evolved from marine crustaceans, and like their relatives, get oxygen via gills (located at the bases of their legs), rather than through lungs like us.

That's why it's essential that they remain moist. If they dry up, they die.

There are several different species of wood bug in our neighbourhood. Only some of them can roll into a ball.

Common names include wood bug, wood louse, potato bug, pill bug (pill bug usually only used for the ones that roll into a ball), armadillo bug, slater, ball bug, chuggy pig, butcher boy, carpenter, hardy back, doodle bug, and cheeselog.

How they multiply: after mating, the female lays several dozen eggs, which she carries in a compact white package on her underside between her legs. The eggs develop for three or four weeks before hatching.

They hatch all at once, and the babies are fully formed and independent. They are nearly invisible at first but grow fast.

They must shed their exoskeleton as they grow, which they do for half of their body at a time. A new soft exoskeleton that was growing underneath is then exposed.