



# Millipede

Be an at-home naturalist! Discover and explore the outdoors with our weekly Critter Card.

## LOOK

Millipedes like dark, damp places. Look for them under decaying leaves, logs, or rocks. Millipedes do not pose any danger to humans, so don't be afraid to pick one up. It may tickle you, or it may just curl up. Be sure to wash your hands afterwards.

## 1,000 legs?

No. Most millipedes have between 40 to 400 legs. If a predator picks a millipede up, it can save itself by letting a few legs go. Then, the legs regenerate or regrow.

## TRY IT

Place a bowl with one half of it in the sun and the other half in the shade. Put some leaf litter in on the sunny side. Using a spoon, gently place a millipede in the center of the bowl and see where it goes.

Photos by Lisa Hutchings

## What is a millipede?



Millipedes are not insects. They are *arthropods*, meaning their bodies have a hard shell called an *exoskeleton*. They are also *invertebrates*, which means they do not have a backbone. They

can live for seven to ten years. Pretty impressive for an invert!

## Nocturnal Decomposers

Millipedes are *nocturnal*, or active at night. Because they have poor vision, they use antennae to sense their surroundings. They are *decomposers*, breaking down decayed plant matter and releasing nutrients that improve the soil. What do they do during the day? Millipedes hide from predators, such as birds, frogs, and small mammals.

Sources: [study.com](http://study.com); [sciencing.com](http://sciencing.com)