



Earwigs owe their name to the widespread superstition that they purposely crawl into the ears of a sleeping person. While it's possible, it's highly unlikely. You've got more important things to worry about.

The primary problem with earwigs is simply as a nuisance. They can bite and they can cause a foul odor and they can do a minimal amount of damage to plants or other materials, but we don't generally consider them threatening.

Earwigs are related to cockroaches and many of their habits are similar. They hatch from an egg into a "little earwig" and then go through stages of "larger earwigs" until they become an adult. They are nocturnal and generally hide during the day. They like dark, moist places.

The nesting places for earwigs are going to be around your foundation in decaying vegetation. They are primarily an outside pest that can be found close to your foundation in wet areas. A flower bed that has moist soil or a lumber pile that is shaded are ideal. You will find them under rocks or in wet grass. Occasionally they will invade the house. Sometimes you will find them in large numbers. They are often transported to other locations in luggage, bundles of papers, or crates of merchandise.

Earwigs are common pests in some areas (like Southern California or Florida) where sprinklers often create a moist breeding area in shrubs during a hot summer. We do have them in the Pacific Northwest. They are more an occasional pest.

Control:

1. Remove harborage areas outside near foundation. It is ideal to have a vegetation free zone 18 to 20 inches from the foundation. Piles of lumber, bricks, etc. should be off the ground.
2. If they invade the house, a vacuum is a good way to remove them.
3. Perimeter sprays with many common garden insecticides are effective against earwigs. Be sure to read the label carefully and follow directions.

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