

MILLIPEDE

The Latin name for the millipede is *Polydesmus angustus*.

A millipede is a many-legged arthropod, which is found throughout the world.

Millipedes have segmented bodies with two pairs of legs on each of the 9 to 100 or more abdominal segments, and one pair on three of the four thoracic segments. Because of its numerous legs, the millipede walks slowly, with a wave-like motion of the legs down the body. In length they range from about 0.2 to 23 cm. The largest North American species may reach a length of 10 cm.

Millipedes have a hard protective layer of calcium-containing chitin, two simple eyes, one pair of mandibles, two short antennae, and stink glands with secretions that repel or kill insect predators. Another protective strategy is to curl into a spiral or a ball when threatened.

These animals live in dark, damp places and feed on decaying plant life, sometimes damaging crops but also enriching the soil. They moult when they grow and may live for one to seven years.