

Millipedes and Centipedes

Millipedes and centipedes are in Phylum Arthropoda.

There are around 12,000 species of millipede on earth, and around 1,400 of them are found in North America!

There are less centipedes, only around 3,000, and they are often grouped with millipedes (Class Diplopoda).



Habitat

Millipedes are ground-dwelling arthropods that love dark, moist habitats.

Millipedes can be found on every continent except Antarctica.

Centipedes can live in a large variety of habitats, from deserts to tropical areas.

Centipedes are also found on every continent besides Antarctica.

Feeding Ecology

Millipedes are detritivores, and they play an important role in ecosystems decomposing leaf litter and cycling nutrients in the soil.

Centipedes are quite the opposite- they are carnivores, and eat other insects. Centipedes are on the top of the food chain and keep other species of insects from getting out of control.

Comparing & Contrasting

Trait	Millipedes	Centipedes
Legs	Two pairs on most body segments; attached to underside of body	One pair per body segment; attached to sides of body; last pair extends backwards
Locomotion	Generally adapted for burrowing or inhabiting small crevices; slow-moving	Generally adapted for running, except for the burrowing soil centipedes
Feeding	Primarily detritivores, some herbivores, few carnivores; no venom	Primarily carnivores with front legs modified into venomous fangs
Spiracles	On underside of body	On the sides or top of body
Reproductive openings	Third body segment	Last body segment
Reproductive behaviour	Male generally inserts spermatophore into female with gonopods	Male produces spermatophore that is usually picked up by female

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