

Wood bug care and information

Wood bug habitat care:

The wood bug habitat does not need much attention. During the day the wood bugs will spend most of their time under the piece of wood. They will come out when it is dark to forage on the food that we gave them.

The sand should stay damp, but not wet. If it is starting to dry out, sprinkle with some water that has been standing out overnight (so the chlorine has evaporated away).

There should be a little food (old veggies/ compost), but not so much that it starts to get mouldy.

Wood bug information:

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

They have a segmented exoskeleton, two antennae and 14 legs.

Only some species of wood bug can roll into a ball.

They come in various colours, depending on the species (there are several different species living in Vancouver). Their colour matches their environment, so that they are camouflaged. They're prey for a variety of larger insectivorous animals, including birds.

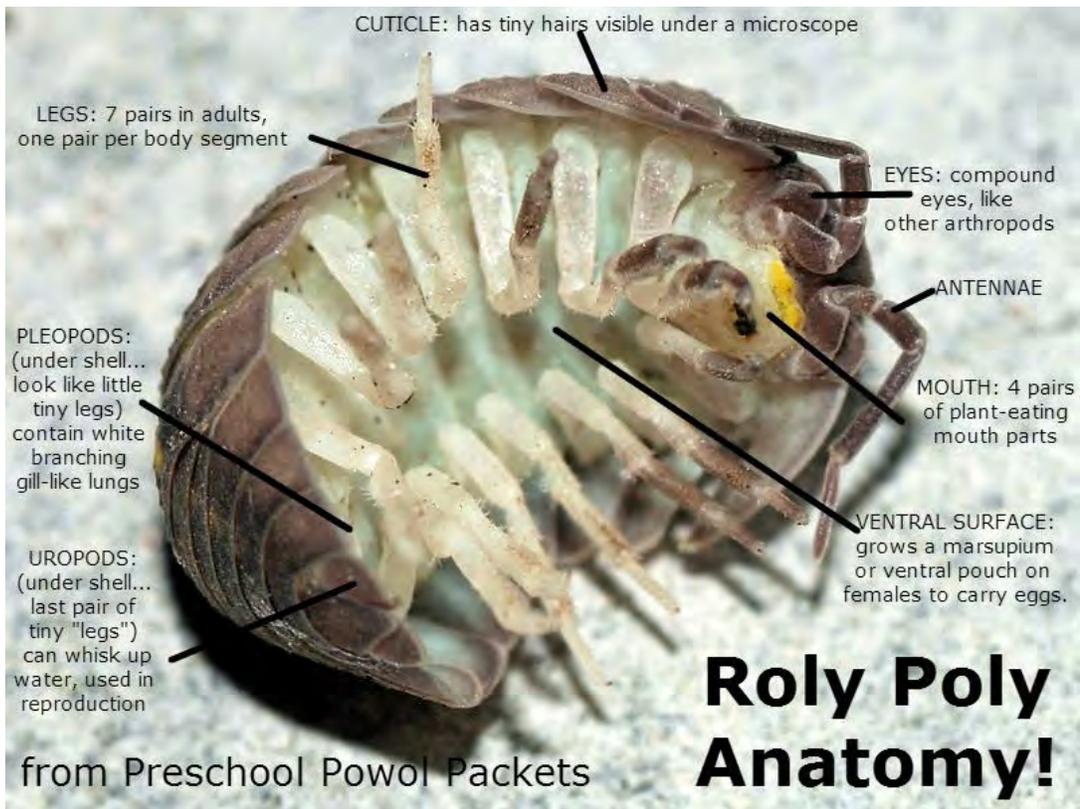
They must shed their exoskeleton as they grow. A new soft exoskeleton grows underneath. You might find the white old skins lying around, or see a wood bug with a whiter appearance that is about to shed. By moulting just half the exoskeleton at a time, the wood bug has some protection during this vulnerable period.

They are crustacean, related to shrimp. When we think of crustaceans, we think of the sea. But these creatures live on land in moist areas, often living in soil and under decaying leaves, rocks, and dead logs.

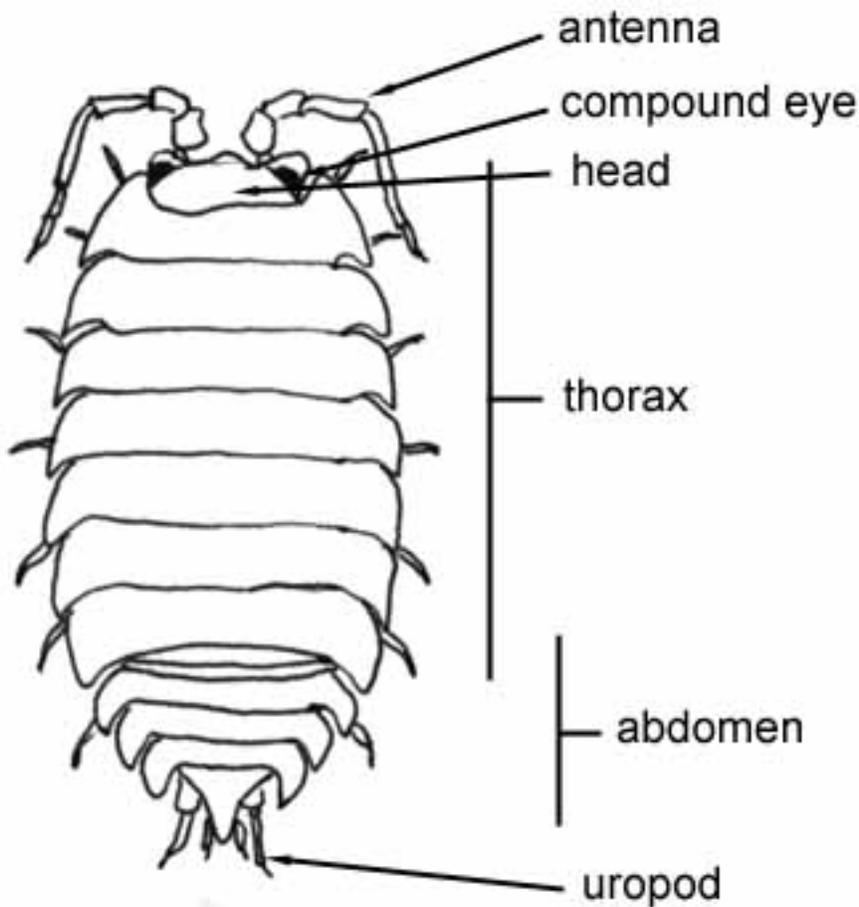
Like their aquatic relatives, wood bugs get the oxygen they need to survive with gills (located at the bases of their legs), rather than through lungs like us. That's why it's essential that they remain moist. If they dry up, they die.

They're mainly scavengers, eating decaying plants and small animals. They are "decomposers", and play an important role in the ecosystem, eating dead matter and excreting nutrient-rich droppings that makes up soil that plants can grow in.

Wood bugs are male and female, but they are nearly impossible to tell apart. After mating, the female lays eggs which she carries between her legs. They hatch three or four weeks later as miniature replicas of the adults.



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<http://www.porcellio.scaber.org/wlice.htm>