

The Millipede's Revenge

A most curious animal indeed
is the multi-footed millipede.
If held in your hand
he'll wrap in a coil
and give off a whiff of motor oil.

But fear him?

Never!

There's no need.

Though here's a small warning
you may wish to heed:

One sure thing he can do to you
is fill your hand with millipoo.

Eeeeew!

Millipedes are **arthropods**, which means *jointed foot* in Greek. All arthropods are **invertebrates**, that is they have no spinal cords or inside skeletons. Instead, arthropods have **exoskeletons**, or skeleton-like structures on the outside of their bodies. They have two or three body parts: head, thorax (chest), and/or abdomen – and jointed legs. Other arthropods include insects, spiders and lobsters, to name a few.

Millipede means *thousand feet* in Latin. They are dark brown, segmented animals, with many hair-like legs, usually 2 pairs on each segment. Their heads look very much like their tails – aren't you glad you're not a millipede? – and they

can grow up to 13 centimeters (about 5 inches) long. Millipedes eat plants. Though they are not worms, they are sometimes called rain worms because they are often found crawling above ground after a summer rain.

Handle gently. They won't hurt you, but they can give off a smelly chemical that can cause your eyes and the inside of your nose and mouth to burn. Do not put a millipede in your mouth, or in your eyes, or up your nose. Do not put your fingers in your mouth, in your eyes or up your nose if you've handled millipedes until you wash them. You should also wash your hands. Oh yes, dear reader, if you don't want to see a millipede poo, then don't pick one up.