

Is it a SLATER or a PILL BUG?

Have you seen them before? They go by the names "Roley Poley", "Butcher Boy", "Woodlice" and "Sow Bugs". You find them in your garden, hidden in dark, damp moist places. They are all Slaters and there are 3 species found in Australia:

- 1) The Common slater - *Porcellio scaber* (introduced from Europe)
- 2) The Pill bug - *Armadillidium vulgare* (introduced from Europe)
- 3) The Flood bug - *Australiodillo bifrons* (native to Australia).

Guess what?

They are not bugs at all!! Infact, they belong to the Order - Isopoda which is part of the Arthropod Class - Crustacea. That is right.... They are **Crustaceans**, just like prawns, crabs and lobsters!!! Unlike their marine ancestors, slaters have become fully adapted to terrestrial life and you can recognise them by their heavily armoured, flattened bodies.

Diet: Slaters are omnivorous, meaning they eat both plant and animals (decaying vegetations, rotting wood, dead insects).

FACT: Not all slaters roll up into a ball for defence, it is only the Pill Bug.

Activity: With supervision, go into your garden and look under pots, logs (places where it is dark and moist) and find as many slaters as you can. *They don't bite or sting, so you can pick them up!*

- Do they roll up into a ball? Then they are a Pill Bug.
- Can you represent your findings visually? Maybe in a graph? (Example: I found 5 slaters: 3 of them were Pill bugs and 2 were Common slaters).
- Send Bug Blitz some photos of your find, we would love to see them!!



Flood Bug



Common slater

Slater's
bodies are
OVAL

Pill bugs
bodies are more
ROUNDED and
they roll up into a
ball.



Dr John Caldwell - Program Director
Erin Nowak - Program Facilitator
bugblitz@outlook.com