

# Bessbugs

## A CAROLINA™ CareSheet

### Habitat Setup and Maintenance

Place about 4 to 5 cm of moist potting soil or humus in a terrarium. Add some leaf litter and the beetles, including the rotten wood that came in the shipping package. Bessbugs prefer damp (not soggy) wood, and they like the dark.

Remember that direct sunlight may overheat and kill the beetles, so place the terrarium in indirect light. Maintain at 20 to 22° C (68 to 72° F). Bessbugs need humidity, so the terrarium soil should be damp. Always have decaying organic material (wood, leaves, compost, etc.) in the terrarium. Mist to keep it humid, but if mold becomes a problem, increase the ventilation or reduce misting. Other than humidity, bessbugs need little care. If they eat all the rotten wood shipped with them, collect additional rotten hardwood locally or purchase our Rotting Wood (item [#144153](#)).

### FAQ's

#### Can bessbugs bite?

No, they are harmless. Although their jaws are strong, bessbugs are adapted for chewing rotten wood, not human skin. At best they may give a mild pinch and can be safely handled. Notice the hooks on the beetles' legs. These can cling so tightly to some fabrics, especially the yarn of sweaters, that you may injure the beetle when you remove it. For this reason, don't allow beetles to crawl on clothing.

#### What is that squeaking sound?

Stridulation. Adults and larvae stridulate, meaning they produce sounds. Adults stridulate by rubbing a rough area under their wings against a similar area on the top of their abdomens. Larvae stridulate by rubbing the tip of the third leg against the joint of the second leg. Since the beetles are somewhat social, the sounds may be communications among colony members.

#### How long do bessbugs live?

Bessbugs can live as adults for up to 1½ years, unusually long for a beetle. They also undergo complete metamorphosis, so their entire life cycle (egg, larva, pupa, and adult) can extend beyond 2 years. The

beetles you receive are of unknown age, but they will probably live for several weeks or months.

**Will my bessbugs reproduce?**

It is unlikely. They must have a very stable environment, like that provided by a large rotting log, for reproduction.

**Since they eat wood, aren't bessbugs destructive?**

No. They feed on the fungi and bacteria in decaying or damaged wood. They do not attack undamaged wood.

**Problems?** We hope not, but if so contact us. We want you to have a good experience.

**Orders and replacements:** 1-800-334-5551, then select Customer Service.

**Technical Support and Questions:** [caresheets@carolina.com](mailto:caresheets@carolina.com)



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