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|                               Centipede                               |
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Version 1.0 (07/24/2005)

Version History:
-3/27/2006, added lup as a host.
1.0: Basic Guide Complete - (07/24/2005)

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|                               C1: Intro                               |
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Centipede. Chances are you've played this game, firing wildly at the snaking
arthropod charging towards you from the top of the screen. I'll admit, I had
actually played Millipede first, but I tend to like Centipede more. It's just
a game that I had no choice but to like - unmolested in its purity, Centipede
is a sterling example of a game that drives you to just play and play.

That's the kind of game I like to play, and that's partly why I'm writing for
Colecovision. It's also because Centipede's just a plain great game. I write
most of my FAQs for little known or overlooked games, it's completely for fun.
Well, Centipede's certainly well known, but it's fun and that's good enough
for me. Besides, chilopods are among my favourite type of 'bugs.'

It should be mentioned that Centipede has another degree of prestige: It was
the first video game deisgned by a woman. Dona Bailey designed the original
Centipede, and what an inventive way to enter the gaming realm. The game is
imaginative, challenging, and fun. It drew huge crowds of male and females,

and a short session with it will reveal why. It's unadulterated fun. So before you hug your new games and sneer at Centipede: realize it doesn't take an overly complicated idea to have complexity, and that fun in a pure form is still fun, even if the game has no fluff.

```
-----  
|                                     C2: Legend                               |  
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```

Nope, this isn't about the "Legend of Centipede." I use some diagrams in this guide, and I feel I should explain everything now, rather than interrupting my flow of thought later on.

A - This is the "Wand" or player in Centipede. It is shaped like the A.

| - This is the laser the "Wand" shoots. This is how the beam looks.

M - This is a Mushroom. M just stands for Mushroom.

P - Poisoned Mushroom. P stands for Poison.

\\// - Spider. Those branches are just there to show the legs.
//\\

F - Flea. F is for Flea, and that's good enough for me.

O - Centipede body segment. It's ideal in showing the tagmosis of the body.

X - Centipede Head. X shows the mouthparts.

XOOOOOOOOO - Standard 11 segment Centipede.
As can be seen, the body parts
OOOO will be shown curving as the
O Centipede turns.
OOOOOX

V D - Scorpion. This is as close as I'm going to get to the odd depiction
\\==< of a scorpion given in the game, at this scale.

- Explosion.

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|                                     C3: Basics                               |  
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```

```
-----GamePlay-----
```

Joystick: The Joystick controls player. You can move horizontally, vertically, and diagonally. There is a limited amount of space on the screen which your movement is restricted to.

Button 1: Fire your weapon. You will be firing at the enemies that approach from various points on the screen.

Note that your fire can be held in for rapid fire. You have to wait for your shots to leave the screen or hit an object if you've shot too many - so your wand functions on pulse fire. The closer you are to an object, then, the faster the pulses will be. Consider that they must travel a smaller distance to hit their target so you'll be allowed to fire again soon.

```
-----Playing Field-----
```

The game's screen allows you only a certain degree of freedom, that is you may


```

|          *                A                M                *          |
+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+

```

*These corners are entry points for Spiders, only approach if necessary as the spiders can appear completely without warning.

-----Scoring-----

Okay, so you know where you can move, how to move, and how and what to shoot. However, why should you destroy more than just Centipedes? You will gain an extra life at each 10000 point mark, so keep firing... but not recklessly.

There's the always added benefit of bragging that you have a rad hi-score, of course.

-----C4: Progress and Modes-----

-----Progress-----

You progress through the game Centipede by destroying each centipede segment onscreen. If you take too long, some Centipede heads will arrive from the left and right of the Player Bounds.

```

|          M          M          M          MMM          M          |
|          M          M          OOOOOX          M          X          |
|          X          M          M          |          M          \\\//          |
|          X          M          A          |          M          /\\/          |
+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+

```

That is a nasty situation, you had been firing at the centipede, but for some reason you were unable to destroy it quickly. Independents move very quickly. It is in your best interest to dispatch Centipedes ASAP.

When a level has been completed, the mushroom colours will change and a new centipede will storm from the top. However, your usual twelve segment centipede will not be the only newcomer- an independent will be in its wake.

As the rounds wear on, the Centipede will be getting smaller, for example ten segments instead of twelve, and there will be more independents.

New enemy is introduced in the second round, Flea, and Scorpions in the fourth round of the Easy mode.

-----Modes-----

Before you begin play you are allowed to choose your mode. Using your Coleco pad, these are:

- 1 - Easy
- 2 - Standard
- 3 - Hard
- 4 - Two Player Easy
- 5 - Two Player Standard
- 6 - Two Player Hard

The Two Player Mode is just an alternating multiplayer point contest.

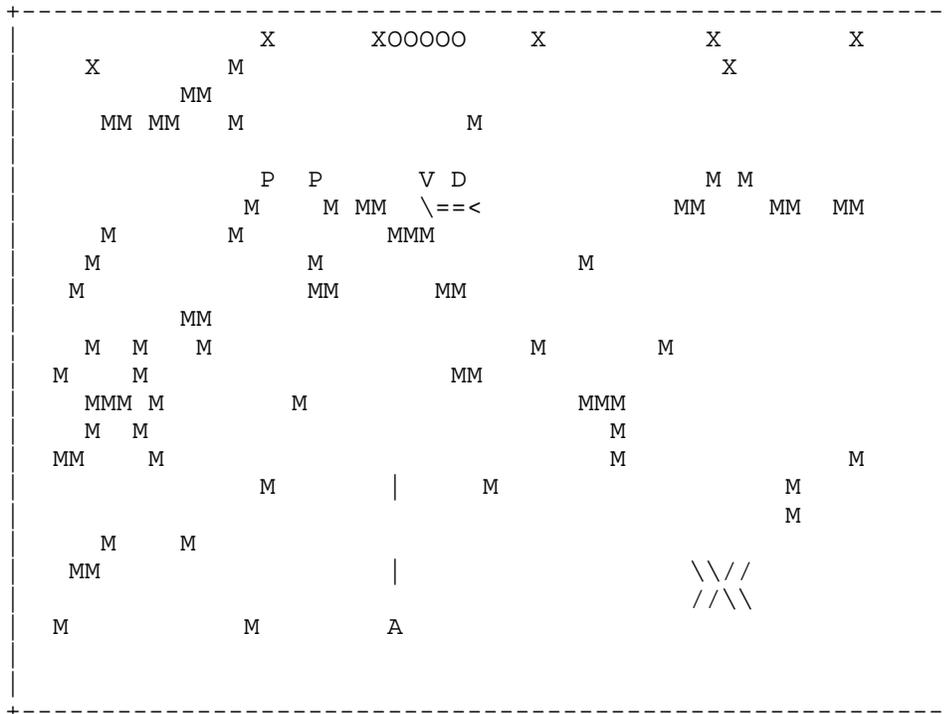
Easy, standard, and hard differ from each other radically straight from the beginning.

Easy Play begins with just a twelve-segment Centipede and some Spiders.

Standard begins with a ten segment Centipede, three independents, spiders and scorpions.

Hard begins with a six segment Centipede, six independents, spiders, and scorpions.

That's a bloody mess! Check it out...



Not that Impressive? Read the next section. Those position mushrooms could cause huge problems right away, and seven centipedes bumping into each other, making their courses muddles and moving at great speeds, they can bear down on you very, very quickly. Not to mention the scorpion appears instantly.

So why play a harder mode? To challenge yourself and in theory, get a higher score in a shorter amount of time than the easy mode.

C5: Enemies

The game's main obstacles are enemies and the Mushrooms. While Mushrooms can be used in your defense, I am going to list them here as an "Enemy" even though they really aren't purely harmful (except for the poisons). Other than the mushrooms, there are four enemies: the flea, the spider, the scorpion, and the Centipedes. They are generally basic enemies, but when they're all put together they are a deadly stew.

*****MUSHROOM*****

The Mushrooms dot the landscape of the game, they are benevolent but can indirectly cause you harm. Centipedes will change their direction when they hit a mushroom and drop down a level, coming ever closer to your Wand. The Poison Mushrooms will send the Centipedes straight down to the bottom.

Quick notes:

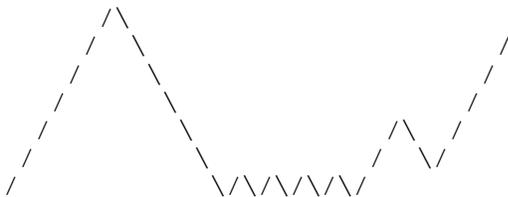
Point Value: 1

- Mushrooms deflect Centipedes, causing them to change direction and drop down one level.
- Mushrooms require four hits to destroy.
- After you die, any partially destroyed mushrooms will be restored. For each partial you will net 5 points.
- Spiders destroy mushrooms.
- If a scorpion's tail touches a mushroom, it will be poisoned.
- Poisoned mushrooms are the same as regular mushrooms, with the exception of their effects on Centipedes.
- Mushrooms are generated in three ways: When you start the game, when a flea lays some down, and when you destroy a Centipede head or independent.
- Poisoned mushrooms lose their poison when you lose a life.

Trivia: Mushrooms are actually "fruiting bodies," reproductive structures for fungi. The actual fungus is usually a vast underground fibrous network. This means that all of the toadstools in your yard could belong to only a few organisms. The largest fungi can be kilometers in diameter.

*****SPIDER*****

The spiders are big, blue, and random. They move on 45-degree angles toward the Wand. They attack you by simply running into you. Their pursuit can be very erratic, however. Here's a concept path:



This does make the Spider considerably dangerous because it tends to stay in the player bounds where some centipede heads may be tormenting you. To further the impact, when a spider passes over a mushroom, it may destroy the mushroom. This hurts if you've specially designed a Mushroom defense.

Another interesting point about spiders is their point value, it's distance-dependent. Check it out:

```

\\//
//\\
|

```

```

\\//
//\\

```

		\\//
		/\\
A	A	A
Long distance is worth only 300 points.	Medium distance is worth 600 points.	Low distance is worth 900 points.

You are rewarded for being brave, or maybe desperate in some cases. The closer you are to the spider, the higher the point value. Very nice.

Spiders can spawn from either lower corner of the screen, so keep an eye and an ear out for them. They have their own sound that plays while they're on the screen.

Trivia: Spider's are a diverse bunch, some use webs of strong silk to capture prey, others hunt, and others lay in wait under a trapdoor. Showing amazing adaptation, some spiders have developed an ant snaring tactic which involves holding their front legs up like antennae, which they use to snare ants when they come to identify the large "ant."

*****FLEA*****

Fleas are an odd lot in this game, they are among the hardest to hit and are the quickest. You see, despite their incredibly simple behaviour, they move so fast that's hard to get in front of them and shoot.

The fleas will travel straight down the screen, laying mushrooms in their wake.

```

F          M          M
          M          M
    ->  F    ->  M
                   M
                   F

```

Point value: 200

They look like easy points, but they move quickly and as the game progresses, they get even faster. They don't lay a strip down the entire screen - so don't fret too much, they'll lay a few. Fleas appear at times following largescale destruction of mushrooms. The more you destroy, the more they shall arrive. The flea is a very simple enemy, but don't underestimate them, they can catch you off guard. Listen for a "dropping" noise when the flea arrives.

Trivia: Speaking in proportions, fleas are among the strongest jumpers in the world.

*****SCORPION*****

I guess you could say that the scorpions really don't do very much, but what they do is enough. When their stinger touches a mushroom, that mushroom will be poisoned.

```
V D      M M          P P V D
\==<      ----->      \==<
```

Point Value: 1000

Scorpions usually appear towards the top of the screen, and their sound will not be mistaken after you've heard it once. Try and shoot them before they reach a mushroom, because you do not want Poisoned mushrooms on the field. There is an obvious problem, however. The Poisoned mushrooms stand a great chance of being behind a normal mushroom, and the scorpion is likely to make multiple. Take them out if possible, otherwise you'll have some serious trouble with a Centipede in the player bounds.

Trivia: Scorpions are viviparous animals, meaning they will give live birth, this is as opposed to oviparous which involves laying eggs and ovoviparous which is laying eggs but keeping them internal.

*****CENTIPEDE*****

The name of the game and possibly your biggest threat are the Centipedes. They have two distinct body parts: their head and the legged segments. A Centipede may be up to twelve total segments (11 legged + one head) in this version and shooting a Centipede will cause them to split.

```
000000X -> 000#00X -> 00X 00X
  |           |           |
  A           A           A
```

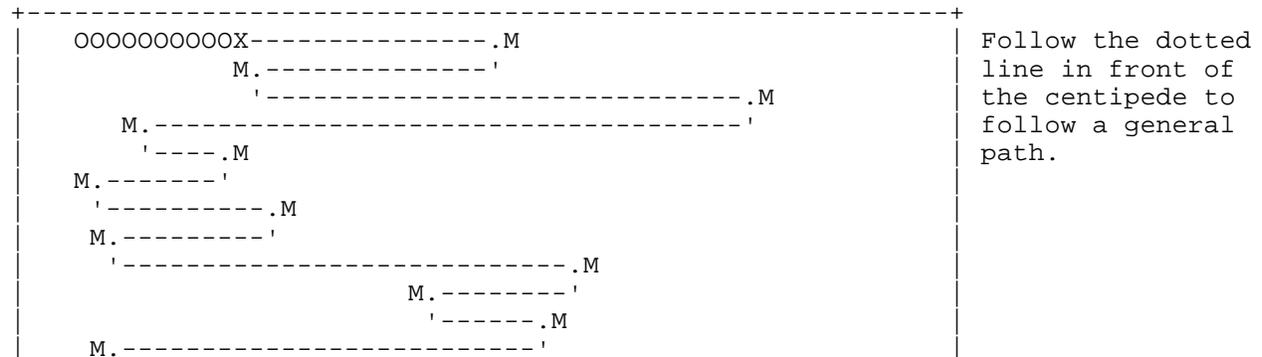
Shooting a centipede in a legged segment will cause them to split. The segment will be destroyed, and every segment before it becomes another centipede, while every segment after it stays a centipede. The smaller the centipede, the faster it will move, so watch out. Shooting a head has a different effect.

```
00000X -> 00000# -> 0000X
  |           |           |
  A           A           A
```

Why does this happen? Shooting the head will cause the next segment in line to become a head.

How do Centipedes move?

Theoretical Centipede Route:



Now, as I said, shooting a multi-segmented Centipede in the body will split it, and shooting it in the head will shorten it (consweuqntly, the rear-end will have the same effect with less points). But what about the final shot on a Centipede? Those independent heads?

```
X  ->  #  ->  M
|
A      A      A
```

Yes, shooting an independent will create a mushroom.

Trivia: Centipedes and Millipedes are separated based on total number of legs right? Wrong. A centipede, of Phylum Chilopoda has one pair of legs per body segment, A millipede, of Phylum Diplopoda, has two pairs of legs per body segment. So I suppose being identified by the numner of legs is "correct," but not in the misconception that it is the total number. While it is often possible to tell if your bug is a millipede or centipede from a glance, the legs/segment is more accurate.

C6: Tips

I'm going to give a bit of advice on playing the game. These may or may not work for you.

****Survival****

*****About Making Mushrooms*****

You are going to need to kill an independent to make a mushroom. Tactics that involve doing this can be tricky to set up. You're going to need precision and patience, and you're going to have to kill spider before they wreck your work. I'm going to tell you right now, that the maintenance might kill you. Building a wall takes too damn long, and the independents move too fast. Walls aren't totally useless, but when you have a Poison Mushroom, they are rendered ineffective. How will you kill a Scorpion when you have to shoot thorough your wall to get it.

Two Mushrooms on either side of the stage could probably be more effective, but if a flea draws a line of mushrooms though the centre of that, it's wrecked. You'll have to fire off 4 shots per musroom until it's clearm and while you're doing that, something may sneak up on you.

To illustrate, say the field is bound as such:

```
MM                MM
                M
            M      M
MM  M      M      MM
            M      M
            M      M
```

Yeah? Wonderful. And that's not even considering the independents entering at the bottom, and the fact that there's going to be poisoned mushrooms somewhere above.

Look, my point is that some defenses are good, but think about it: The pedes are going to be coming too fast, they could even deflect themselves beyond

your barrier in theory. There's going to be Centipede heads coming from the bottom, Spiders ruining your defenses, and fleas screwing them up. There's also the Poisoned mushrooms. There's a lot that can go wrong with them. They look nice in theory, but aren't really practical.

Here's a decent style of defense, however:

```
M M
M M
```

You have two degrees of escape in case of spiders: up and down, and Centipedes cannot enter your little barrier. Place it somewhere towards the middle of the player bounds, because too high/low will restrict movement. Fleas won't lay any mushrooms in here, and centipedes can't enter (unless they're poisoned, but then they won't stay in there, just pass on by). Just make sure you don't

try to hide in something like:

```
M
M M      M
M M  or M M

M M  or M M
M M      M
      M
```

You get the idea, that gives Centipede access. Also, make sure it's two mushrooms high, so that your ship is fully covered.

You see, think small. There's too much that can go wrong with elaborate defense mechanisms, seeing as they are too much trouble to set up when the game picks up speed so fast. And on the difficulties greater than Easy? Forget about it.

Just promise me one thing? Avoid something like this:

```

|           M                               M           MM
|      M           M           M           MM           M
|     MM          M           MMM          MM          M
|          MM          M           M           M           M
|            M  M          M           M           M
|                                     M
+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+

```

Keep your playing area clean! The reason being, you need room to move, and that kind of mushroom forest will make centipede behaviour unpredictable.

****Offense****

Now, a pretty typical Centipede strategy is Funneling the chilopod down tunnels such as this:

```
M M
M M
M M
M M
M M
M M
```

Where you can shoot the thing as it is coming down. Great, only the

preparation
could go wrong and it is very odd to see this naturally.

The ideal Tunnel system would be this:

```
  M
M M M
M M M
M M M
M M M
M M M
M M M
M M M
```

Where a Centipede from either side is going to enter. These tunnels will need a great deal of upkeep, if this happens:

```
P P
M M
M M
M M
M M
```

...you are going to be a little more than pissed. Seriously, besides kind of cheapening the game, there's going to be too much emphasis on keeping the tunnel together. And this game really, really, doesn't give you much of an opportunity to be this elaborate.

If you want to you can use the lines fleas lay down as a less effective tunnel that's random but almost as effective:

```
M  M
M  M
M  M
M  M
M  M
M  M
```

Even that is going to help you out, and you won't mind as much if it gets a P.

My final word on building: If you want to do it, it's there for you. It might be easier to accomplish in another version of the game, but it's more than a little tedious in this version. I said tunnels cheapen the game? Well that's my view. Play the game any way you want, and if that gets you the high score, good for you.

Okay, so how do you handle some enemies?

Spiders: While it's true that their points greatly vary, don't dwell on the 900 or you might find yourself dead.

Scorpions: They won't run into you but kill them as soon as possible, before they can poison too many mushrooms. Really, poisons give you know benefits, they are nothing but evil.

Fleas: They aren't worth the 200 points, don't take any risks with them.

Centipedes: Blast them when they're close to the top, and kill them quickly before independents come from the sides of the player bounds.

It may be best to dispatch them like so:

```

0000X      000X      00X      OX      X      M
  |  ->    |  ->    |  ->    |  ->    |  ->
  A          A          A          A          A          A

```

You'll get more points that way anyways, so as much as possible, lead your fire into the heads. Splitting a Centipede really isn't the best idea if it can be avoided, it just complicates things for you.

If you dispatch a Centipede altogether in the player bounds, take the time to remove the mushroom if it looks like it will be in the way.

*About all enemies other than the pedes, they all make their own noises. Learn them and you won't have to watch every part of the screen all the time. Your game could improve dramatically.

Well, that's about it. I know a lot of this dealt with Mushrooms, but they're a part of the game and I had to say something about them. Even if I don't like to use them, others may relish them. And when you think about it, tips relating to just the enemies wouldn't be too meaty. Besides the Centipedes, they're all very simple.

But it just goes to show you - the game is very simple in concept, but there are ways you can mix it up. Beautiful.

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|                                     C7: Credit                                     |
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As usual, I thank Atari for bringing us the game, and my hosts for letting you see it. But I must also thank Dona Bailey. Not only did you create this awesome game, but you opened the door for women to design as well.

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