

Carpet Beetles



Description

The adult carpet beetle has a distinctive varied colouring of brown or black with white or yellow mottling. It is 3 mm long and found outdoors from spring to early summer feeding on pollen and nectar before moving indoors to lay its eggs.

The larvae require a protein diet and are, therefore, found in bird's nests, animal furs and skins and carpets. The larvae are approximately 5 mm in length, brown in colour and are commonly known as 'woolly bears' due to their characteristic covering of hairs.

Fur Beetles

Although the adults have a distinctive white spot on each wing casing and the larvae are different in appearance to woolly bears, the life cycle of the fur beetle is similar to that of the carpet beetle and certainly the larvae cause similar damage to fabrics, animal skins and fur coats.

Biology and Habitat

The carpet beetle is a major textile pest of the home where central heating and fitted carpets provide harbourage for undisturbed breeding.

The eggs are laid in cracks and crevices and within 2-3 weeks they hatch, and the emergent woolly bears then embark on a continuous feeding binge moulting several times before pupating. The length of the larval life is normally 60-70 days but this may increase or decrease depending on temperature, humidity and diet. The larvae do not like the light and have the capacity to hibernate in cold conditions and to re-emerge in spring. The adult lives for up to six weeks during which time it will fly off in search of pollen and nectar and for egg laying sites.

Importance

Carpet beetles neither carry germs nor do they spread disease and hence their presence does not constitute a risk to health. However the activities of the woolly bears will cause damage and indeed ruin carpets, clothes, animal furs and leathers.

Control

Carpet beetles have a capacity to wander and hence infestations, whilst manifesting themselves initially in one room, may also exist in others and hence vigilance is required. It is important first to trace the source of the infestation. Check the roof space for old bird's nests and wool based lagging or other materials, examine the cracks between floorboards around the edges of rooms and under skirting boards for accumulations of debris, and check sheepskin rugs and all animal fur/skin clothing. Infested nests and inexpensive materials should be removed and burned, and the areas from which they have been removed thoroughly vacuumed using a nozzle head and paying particular attention to cracks and crevices.

Home treatment can be undertaken using a residual insecticide **specifically for indoor use on carpet beetles/crawling insects**. These should be sprayed on floorboards, in cracks and gaps around skirting boards.

Safety

Not all insecticides are safe for use indoors, particularly where food is present or on certain materials/surfaces. To protect yourself and others and to minimise damage to the environment. **ALWAYS READ AND FOLLOW THE APPLICATION AND USE INSTRUCTIONS PRINTED ON THE CONTAINER.**

Disclaimer

The treatment will involve spraying affected areas with a water based insecticide. In some cases as a consequence of the treatment, temporary or permanent staining or marking of sprayed surfaces can occur. Whilst every care is taken to minimise the likelihood of this happening, treatment is undertaken at the customers own risk. Any concerns should be discussed with the Pest Officer prior to the treatment commencing.

For Pest Control treatment: 01454 868001

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**South Gloucestershire Council
Environmental Protection
Department for Environment and Community Services
PO Box 299, Civic Centre, High Street,
Kingswood, Bristol
BS15 0DR**

Email: Environmental.protection@southglos.gov.uk

Web: www.southglos.gov.uk/envpro