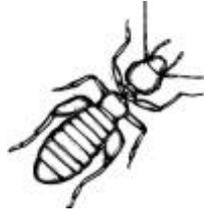


Booklice



Booklice (also known as Psocids) are common but harmless household insect pests, which are between 1mm and 2mm in length, i.e. smaller than a pinhead. Booklice are grey or brown in colour and are commonly attracted by flour.

Biology & Habitat

Booklice are generally found in the dark areas of rooms, particularly in kitchens where dry food products such as flour are stored and where humidity is comparatively high favouring the growth of microscopic moulds where the booklice consume. Their preference for the dark makes kitchen cupboards a favourite habitat. They usually reach their peak around the Autumn.

The female will normally lay around 50 eggs but it can be as many as 200 and then, once hatched these develop in a series of up to seven nymphal stages. A booklouse's life expectancy is approximately four to six months.

Importance

Booklice do not indicate poor hygiene, as booklice can be found in both clean and dirty properties. They consume little food but their presence will taint foodstuff rendering it unpalatable. Hence psocids are unpleasant and unacceptable but they do not spread disease and do not constitute any risk to health.

Control

Remove and dispose of all infested food. Remember that psocids, being small, may penetrate any container, which is not completely sealed; in the case of tins remove labels, which could be providing harbourage, but be sure to write on the tin what it contains.

It may not be necessary to use an insecticide. If an insecticide has to be used, ensure all foodstuffs are removed to avoid contaminating the food with chemicals. The best method of eradicating booklice from your kitchen and foodstuffs is to dispose of all food in your outside bin.

Once you have done this, clean cupboards using a dry cloth and by vacuuming, paying particular attention to the crevices between shelving and cupboard carcass. Immediately dispose of the vacuum cleaner bag to prevent reintroducing the Booklice into your kitchen. Where wall plaster is exposed paint with an emulsion containing a mould inhibitor. Before reintroducing food ensure the cupboard is completely dry.

Prevent further re-infestation by ensuring your cupboards are free from condensation and damp; ventilate your kitchen particularly during cooking or washing, store all foodstuff in sealed containers and store flour in a covered washable container.

Any containers or packaging believed to have been infested with booklice can be treated through placing them in a plastic bag in the freezer for 24 hours. This will kill any eggs that may remain in the packaging or containers.

If you persevere with this advice you should be successful in eradicating these insects, however if you require treatment please ring our Pest Control Service.

Free Internet access is available at all South Gloucestershire libraries

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