

Carpet Beetles, Clothes Moths:

Your fabrics don't have to nourish these hungry pests!

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Carpet Beetles — Clothes Moths

You'll find more carpet beetles than clothes moths in North Dakota, but both are common and equally destructive to fabrics. Because of the similarity in feeding habits, clothes moths often get the blame for damage done by carpet beetles.

It is important to note the difference since some control methods aren't universal.

Carpet beetle larvae do not spin webs and they are more active than **clothes moth larvae**. The most noticeable characteristic of **carpet beetle larvae** is the tuft of long brown hair at the end of the body (Figure 1).

The larvae of the webbing clothes moth leave behind a silken web as they feed. A larva of the casemaking clothes moth spins a protective case which it drags about. Clothes moth larvae usually stay on their food whereas carpet beetle larvae may crawl

from one room to another.

Adult carpet beetles (Figure 1) are a dull black color and are about 1/8 inch long. They may breed and feed outdoors in such places as bird and rodent nests but also may fly or crawl into homes where breeding and feeding also take place. Where houses are close together, infestations may start from adult beetles that fly from house to house. Also, since the adults feed on the pollen of certain plants such as spirea, daisies and asters, the beetles may be more common around homes where these plants are grown.

Adult clothes moths (Figure 2) are a yellowish or buff color and have a wingspread of about 1/2 inch. They usually hide in dark places, but occasionally they may be seen flying aimlessly around the house. Unlike most other moths, they're not attracted to light.

Feeding Habits

Both carpet beetles and clothes moths do their damage in the larval stage, feeding on clothing and household goods that contain wool, fur, hair or feathers. Among the wide range of household articles which may be damaged are clothing, carpets, rugs, blankets, pillows, upholstery and furniture padding.

Clothes moth larvae grow to 1/3 inch in length. They may have a duration from several months up to two years. Adult clothes moths do not eat and therefore live a relatively short time.

For the **carpet beetle**, the active larval stage lasts from several months to over a year, depending on temperatures and food conditions.

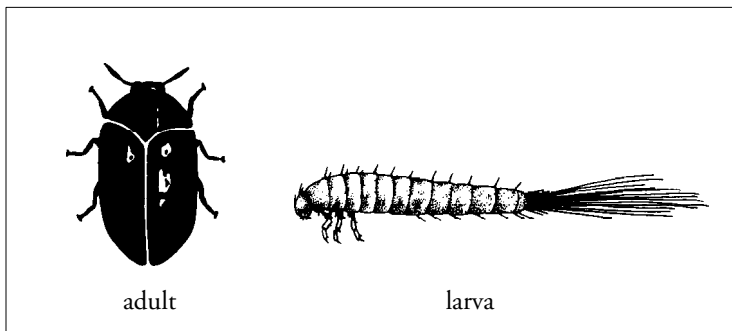


Figure 1. Carpet Beetle

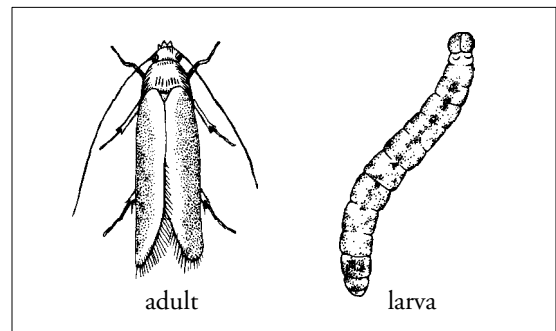


Figure 2. Clothes Moth

Control Measures

Prevention

Good housekeeping is essential to prevent carpet beetle infestations. Thorough cleaning should be done on a regular basis. When vacuuming, be sure not to miss typically non-disturbed areas such as under or behind stuffed furniture, air vents, baseboards, moldings, closets and other hard-to-reach places. After each vacuuming job, place the disposable vacuum bag in a plastic trash bag, seal it up and place it in an outdoor garbage can.

When cleaning, don't neglect inspecting and cleaning wild game trophies and skins, wall hangings made from fabric or any other similar items that would harbor clothes moths or carpet beetles.

Laundry or dry clean clothes and other items before storage. Egg-laying clothes moths are attracted to soiled articles. Bright, hot sunlight and wind reduce larvae and potential damage. Clothing or similar items to be stored should be exposed to sun and the weather and brushed if such items are not in need of cleaning prior to storage.

Cedar-lined closets and chests help to prevent, but are not a guarantee against infestation.

The effectiveness of paradichlorobenzene (PDB) flakes, crystals or balls depends on the concentration of the fumes produced. This repellent is, therefore, most effective in airtight containers such as trunks, chests or storage closets that are not opened on a regular basis. When PDB is to be used in a trunk or other container, the crystals or flakes should be interspersed between sheets of paper at layered intervals of garments or blankets. Use 1 ounce per 2 cubic feet of container

space or 1 pound per 100 cubic feet of closet space.

Naphthalene flakes, balls or crystals may be substituted for PDB.

Furs or other garments placed in cold vault storage will be protected from infestation.

Inspection

Locate the source of infestation before treatment. Carpet beetle larvae prefer to feed in dark, undisturbed, protected places. Using a flashlight and something as a probe (such as a pencil or nail file), check areas such as under baseboards, in and around upholstered furniture, piano felts, air ducts, wild game trophies, stored cereal products (including dry pet food), woolens, furs and any fabrics in storage. Frequently the cast skins of carpet beetle larvae or webbing of clothes moth larvae will be found as an indication of infestation. Also, adult beetles flying near windows can be a symptom of carpet beetle larval infestation and damage. Adult clothes moths do not feed in fabrics but may be seen in darkened corners at night.

Insecticides

An existing infestation of carpet beetles or clothes moths can be controlled with the use of a registered insecticide such as allethrin, resmethrin or pyrethrin available in ready-to-use aerosol sprays. Before using any spray material, remove as much of the infestation as possible by vacuuming under furniture, rugs, rug pads and along edges of carpeting, etc. Be sure to dispose of the vacuum cleaner bag.

Apply coarse sprays as surface treatments to carpeting and edges of carpeting, closets, corners, cracks, baseboards, storage areas and other possible infestation sites.

Pesticide Safety Tips

- Always read the label before buying or using pesticides. Use pesticides only for the purpose(s) listed and in the manner described.
- Pesticides that require special protective clothing or equipment should be used only by trained, experienced applicators.
- Do not apply more than the specified amount of pesticide. Overdoses can harm you and the environment.
- Keep pesticides away from food and dishes.
- Keep children and pets away from pesticides and sprayed areas.
- Do not smoke or eat while applying pesticides.
- Avoid inhalation of pesticides.
- Never spray outdoors on a windy day.
- When you mix pesticides, do it carefully to avoid splashing.
- Avoid breaks or spills of pesticide containers.
- If you spill a pesticide on your skin or on your clothing, wash with soap and water and change your clothing immediately.
- Store pesticides under lock in the original containers with proper labels. Never transfer a pesticide to a container that would attract children, such as a soft drink bottle.
- Dispose of empty containers safely. Wrap single containers of home use products in several layers of newspaper, tie securely and place in a covered trash can. Never burn boxes or sacks. In the case of farm or ranch use, single containers may be buried where water supplies will not be contaminated. Dispose of large quantities in special incinerators or special landfills.
- Wash with soap and water after using pesticides, and launder clothes before wearing again.
- If someone swallows a pesticide, check the label for first aid treatment. Call or go to the doctor or the hospital immediately and keep the pesticide label with you.

REMEMBER—ALWAYS READ THE LABEL BEFORE USING ANY PESTICIDE. DO NOT WAIT UNTIL SYMPTOMS APPEAR TO GET MEDICAL CARE.