



Carpet Beetle *Anthrenus verbasci*

Description

There are several species of carpet beetle prevalent in the UK. The most common species are the varied carpet beetle (pictured) and the furniture carpet beetle. In both species, adults are normally between 2-4mm in size, and have a varied pattern of white, brown, and yellow spots or scales on their back.

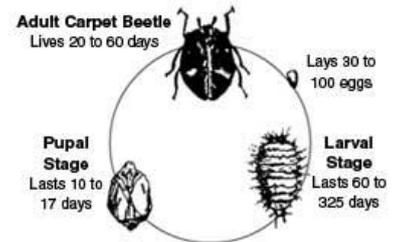


Mature larvae are approximately 4-5mm in size, and have a series of dense tufts of bristles and hair located on each side of the rear end of the body. These bristles give rise to their common name of "woolly bears".

Habitat & Life Cycle

Carpet beetles are a major pest to textiles, they have adapted to thrive in centrally heated homes which have constant temperatures, and wall-to-wall carpeting, which allows breeding to occur undisturbed.

A female carpet beetle normally lays approximately 40 eggs, which take just over two weeks to hatch. The larvae will live and feed for a period of 7-10 months. Following this, the larvae then turns to pupa and an adult beetle will emerge approximately one month later. Adults, however, will normally only live for a period of 2-6 weeks. Adults can fly and may be found in windowsills and they are attracted to daylight



Prevention & Control

Larval forms of the carpet beetle can cause considerable damage to keratin-containing products such as wool, furs, leather, silk and dried animal remains. Occasionally, food products of animal origin will also be attacked, such as cereals and fibres.

Carpet beetles thrive in conditions where they remain undisturbed, for example beneath carpets, around skirting boards, and in wardrobes. However, they do not present significant health hazards, but they are potential vectors of anthrax. In some cases, larval hairs can cause skin irritations to those exposed to large numbers.

Their wandering habit means they frequently infest wide areas, making them difficult to control. To begin with, the source of infestation must be traced. This could be found in old nests, animal remains, wool based lagging, soundproofing, wool based furnishings, or debris that has accumulated between floorboards. All sources of infestation should be removed and burnt where possible.

Insecticide treatment is vital where infestations are large. This will ensure that all larvae are killed. Check DIY stores for 'crawling insect' aerosols and powders. We can not recommend brands or suppliers. Follow the manufacturer's instructions and safety precautions. It is recommended that you test small areas of carpets and valuable furnishings to ensure that the chemical does not damage or stain them.

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