

CARPET BEETLE (*ANTRENUS VERBASCI*)

APPEARANCE

There are three species of carpet beetle; the black carpet beetle (*Attagenus piceus*), the furniture carpet beetle (*Antrenus flavipes*) and the varied carpet beetle (b) (*Antrenus verbasci*). The varied carpet beetle is the most commonly found infesting homes. The adult beetle is about 3mm in length and is dark brown, mottled with white or yellowish patches.

LIFE CYCLE

Adult beetles live out of doors, but females fly to lay between 50 and 100 eggs indoors on food material. These eggs hatch into the larval stage commonly known as the 'Woolly Bear'. The larvae are about 5mm in length and covered in tufts of arrow headed bristles which give rise to the common name. During this larval stage the larva has between six and twenty skin moults. The larvae can remain at the larval stage for over 100 days depending on food supply and temperature. Pupation into the adult form occurs during the last of these skin changes.

FEEDING HABITS

The adult beetles live on plants and flowers feeding on pollen and nectar. They enjoy bright warm conditions,

(a)



(b)



causing no noticeable damage. The larvae (Woolly Bears) (a) feed on natural materials of animal origin such as bird nests and woollen carpets. During the long larval stage damage to clothing and furnishings made of natural fibres may be noticed.

SIGNS OF INFESTATION

After the adult female has laid her eggs in the home she may be noticed on window boards attracted by the natural light wanting to return to the plants and flowers outside which are her food source. The larvae will be deep into their feeding material and are not sighted until very noticeable damage occurs to household furnishings.

CONTROL

Complete eradication can be achieved although a thorough treatment of the home is necessary, which includes the removal of bird nesting material from lofts and attics and infested pipe lagging. Also the treatment of carpets and some furnishings with an insecticide which contains some residual qualities may be necessary. Areas under heavy furnishings which are seldom moved is a favoured sight for the larval stage of the adult beetle providing a dark and often undisturbed environment for development. Natural fibres are the favoured food source and as such carpets with a high wool content are at greater risk. Most infestations can be controlled by means of a thorough cleaning regime.

The Environmental Health Division offers a comprehensive Pest Control Service, and our fully trained Officers are available to supply further information if necessary.

If you would like an explanation of this fact sheet in your language or to obtain copies in Braille, on audio tape or large print please contact 01509 634560.

For further information contact:

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