

# Carpet, Museum, and Fur Beetle

Advice to Householders



# Carpet, Museum & Fur Beetle Control

## Characteristics

The carpet beetle has hard, leathery forewings, which meet along the centre of the back. It has biting mouthparts and a well-developed thorax (part of the body between the head and the abdomen). The adult is 2-4mm long, brown or black in colour and can have mottled scales in yellow and or white across its back. The antennae are club like and segmented, the eyes are smooth and round. It has short legs that retract into grooves underneath it. Its larvae are brown and bear three bunches of golden hairs on the tip of their abdomen. The varied carpet beetle, furniture carpet beetle and museum beetle are all very similar in their appearance. The fur beetle is oblong in shape, 4<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> – 6mm long, black in colour with a small patch of white hairs on either side of the elytra (lower part of the wing) and on the base of the thorax. The larvae have distinctive tufts of very long hairs that project backwards and are known as ‘wooly bears’.



Varied Carpet Beetle



Larvae or “Woolly Bear”



Fur Beetle

## Behaviour

**The carpet beetle** is wide spread across Europe and is most commonly found in the south of the country. The furniture carpet beetle is of subtropical origin and is more sensitive to the cold than its counterparts. All species are a pest of animal products and occasionally foodstuffs. Carpet beetles are one of the biggest pests of textiles thanks to the provision of central heating, which maintains a constant warm temperature, and wall-to-wall carpeting which allows the insects to breed undisturbed. Due to the improvement in moth-proofing treatments, their challenge for survival has been made easier.

**The museum beetle** is commonly found in museums, where it is a particular pest of dried specimens and textiles. It has however, also been found to infest grain. The fur beetle may be found in a wide variety of products including furs, skins, textiles and grain.

Carpet beetles live outdoors feeding on pollen and nectar. They can be found wandering on walls and windows. In temperate climates, the larvae are particularly evident in the autumn when they wander in search of food and hibernation sites. Carpet beetles thrive in situations where they remain undisturbed e.g. beneath carpets, around skirting boards and in wardrobes. Bird and rodent nests, animal remains and dead insects are frequently sources for infestation.

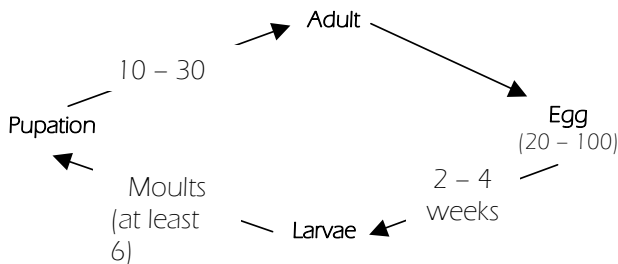
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## Significance

These beetles are of little significance as a health hazard, although they are potential carriers of anthrax. In certain situations, the larvae hairs can cause skin irritations to those exposed to large numbers of the insects.

The larvae forms of the insects can cause considerable damage to keratin-containing products such as silk, wool, fur, leather and dried animal remains. Occasionally food products of plant origin such as cereals and fibers will also be attacked. Damage by these beetles can be identified by the formation of clean irregular holes in textiles; these tend to occur around the seams. There is no webbing or excrement present and by the time the larvae are observed, considerable damage has often been done. Due to the large number of larvae moults, the cast skins can be misleading in terms of the size of the infestation.

## Life Cycle



## Control Measures

The wandering habits of these insects means that they frequently infest a wide area which makes them difficult to control. The first step in carpet beetle control is to trace the source of the infestation. This may be an old nest, animal remains, wool based lagging, soundproofing materials, wool-based furnishings or the debris that accumulates between and around floorboards and skirting boards.

### HYGIENE MANAGEMENT

All sources of infestation should be removed and burnt if possible. Routine surveillance and regular cleaning are also important.

### INSECTICIDAL CONTROL.

Thorough surface spray treatments with residual activity are vital where infestations are extensive in order to ensure that all larvae are killed. Care should be taken when treating carpets and other valuable furnishings.

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Other information leaflets available:

- ▶ Larder Beetle Control
- ▶ Furniture Beetle (Woodworm) & Wharf Borer Control
- ▶ Cockroach Control
- ▶ Black Ant Control
- ▶ Spider Beetle Control
- ▶ Housefly Control
- ▶ Flea Control
- ▶ Biscuit Beetle Control
- ▶ Silverfish, Earwig, woodlouse & Slug Control
- ▶ Psocid (Booklouse) Control
- ▶ Seagull Control
- ▶ Pest Control Advice
- ▶ Rodent Control

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