

## **PEST CONTROL ADVICE SHEET TEXTILE PESTS**



### **INTRODUCTION**

There are a number of pests which will attack clothing and furnishings in the home. They fall into two basic categories: moths and beetles.

Due to the industrial mothproofing of carpets, the threat of damage by moths has reduced markedly, but they can still be found in older houses where carpets have not been treated. However, the incidence of beetle varieties has increased due to the installation of central heating and wall-to-wall carpeting in many modern houses.

There are many species of textile pest, but we shall concentrate on the most common types: clothes moth, the varied carpet beetle and the fur beetle.

### **WHAT DAMAGE DO THEY DO?**

Textile pests can cause a considerable amount of damage to many fabrics. The adult insect does not feed, but the larvae will chew their way through the fibres of carpets and clothing causing clean irregular holes. In feeding they show a preference for textiles of an animal origin including carpet, woollens, skins and furs. However, they will damage other fabrics by simply biting through and discarding the fibres without consuming them.

In all cases it is not the adult, but the larval form that causes the damage. It is therefore appropriate to describe the appearance of both the adult and the larva.

### **WHERE TO LOOK FOR TEXTILE PESTS**

In a heavily infested home they may be found anywhere where there are carpets or woollens etc. The larvae are commonly found in dark undisturbed places such as beneath furniture, inside cupboards, in drawers and in airing cupboards. The adults are attracted to light and tend to be found on window sills and around lamp shades. Infestations of the varied carpet beetle and the fur beetle often originate from old birds' nests in a loft space and then spread through the home by following hot water pipes etc.

### **HOW TO TREAT AGAINST TEXTILE PESTS**

The job of controlling textile pests is not an easy one as immediate results are rarely achieved and much perseverance and patience is required. Below is a suggested course of action:

- 1 Remove any birds' nests and carpets/fabric stored in the loft as these act as a reservoir of infestation.
- 2 Treat carpets and clothing with recognised mothproofers, carefully following the manufacturer's instructions.
- 3 Use an insecticidal dust to treat between the floorboards, around the skirting boards and in the loft if any nesting material is found.

- 4 In the case of the moth it may be necessary to remove the fabric from beneath upholstered furniture and spray with an insecticide suitable for the purpose.

As stated, textile pests can be persistent, and it is often best to contact a professional pest controller.

#### **SAFETY ADVICE**

Carefully follow the manufacturer's instructions when using insecticides. Care should be taken not to spray near uncovered food. Insecticides should be stored in a cool and dry place where children cannot reach, and always wash your hands after using an insecticide.