

PUBLIC PROTECTION – ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICE

Pest advice - Carpet beetles

What do they look like?

The adult carpet beetle is approximately 2–3mm in length, oval in shape, with a speckled appearance caused by a covering of white, brown, black and pale yellow scales. The carpet beetle larva is approximately 4–5mm in length, brown in colour with white bands and covered in short hairs.



Where do they live?

During the summer months, the adult beetles live outdoors, feeding on pollen and nectar. In the autumn the beetles will wander or fly into buildings in search of food and hibernation sites. There, they will lay eggs on materials of animal origin and the resulting larvae feed on these materials for several months until they are fully grown. They then pupate (usually in spring) and emerge as adult beetles about 10 days later.

What do they eat?

The larvae require a diet high in animal proteins, and will feed on woollen carpets and clothing, animal furs, skins and leather. They are often found in birds nests, where they feed on feathers and droppings.

Pest status

The larvae can cause significant damage to woollen carpets and clothing, and other household items of animal origin.

The larvae are serious pests of stuffed animals in museum collections.

Control measures:

Hygiene

Infested areas should be thoroughly vacuumed, paying particular attention to cracks and crevices. Old birds nests in lofts and eaves should be removed.

Insecticide control

An insecticide suitable for the treatment of crawling insect pests should be supplied to the infested area, paying particular attention to cracks and crevices, and items such as woollen carpets which may be food sources for the larvae. When using a pesticide on a fabric, a small area should be tested before a full treatment is carried out. Always follow the instructions on the label.

Professional advice & treatment

Powys County Council does not undertake treatment for carpet beetles. Commercial pest control companies are listed on the internet in the Yellow Pages and Thompson's Local Directory.