

# Clothes moth fact sheet

The webbing clothes moth is the most common fabric moth. Adults are golden coloured with reddish golden hairs on top of the head. Wings, with a span of about 1/2 inch, are fringed with a row of golden hairs. Because the moths are weak flyers and not attracted to lights, they are usually found very close to the infested items, such as in dark areas of closets.



Don't confuse the clothes moth with the common food- and grain-infesting moths that are frequently seen flying around the house. At rest, clothes moths are only about 1/4 inch in length, whereas most food-infesting moths are about 1/2 inch in length. Clothes moths are relatively easy to catch when they land. When examined with a hand lens, little tufts of hair are evident on their heads— food and grain moths do not have these tufts. Clothes moths usually only fly around the immediate area of the house where the infestation is found, and their flight pattern are distinctive: they tend to flutter about rather than fly in a direct, steady manner like the food-infesting moths.

Case making clothes moths are similar in size and appearance to webbing clothes moths. The wings of the case making clothes moth are more brownish than those of the webbing clothes moth and have faint dark-coloured spots. Hairs on the head are lighter coloured than those of the webbing clothes moth. Larvae of both species are nearly identical, except that larvae of the case making clothes moth always carry a silken case with them as they feed. They never leave this silken tube, but enlarge it as they grow. They feed from either end and retreat into it when disturbed. This case takes on the colouration of the fabric eaten by the larvae.

## Dealing with the clothes moth

Clothes moths can be controlled by a variety of methods, including periodic dry cleaning or laundering, proper storage, freezing, heating, or fumigating with dry ice, trapping, or using an insecticide. If humidity can be kept low inside buildings, an environment that is not suitable for clothes moth development will be created. Building construction that is free of many tiny cracks and crevices also contributes to fewer clothes moth problems. Good housekeeping practices are also important. Although most people can control clothes moth problems themselves, some infestations are best handled by a pest control applicator that has the equipment, materials, and experience necessary to deal with a difficult control job.