

Carpet beetle fact sheet

Carpet beetles feed on animal and plant substances such as wool, fur, feathers, hair, hides, horns, silk, and bone as well as cereals, cake mixes, red pepper, rye meal and flour. Other food sources include powdered milk, dog and cat food, leather, bookbindings, dead insects, and even cotton, linen, and rayon when stained with spilled foods or animal excreta. The larvae cause the damage, crawling from room to room and living behind baseboards and mouldings, and in air ducts, dresser drawers, carpets, clothing, and furniture. Adult beetles fly readily and may be found outdoors feeding on pollen, especially on plants with white or cream coloured flowers. Some adult beetles are attracted to flowering plants close to homes and can easily enter through small openings. Some infestations are started by adult carpet beetles that fly from house to house. Also, carpet beetles breed and feed outdoors in places such as bird and rodent nests. Eggs and larvae may be carried into homes on articles containing wool or other animal fibres.



Life cycle

All carpet beetles pass through four stages: egg, larva, pupa, and adult. Adults fly readily and during warm sunny days feed outdoors on pollen of various flowers and shrubs, especially spirea and crepe myrtle. Depending on the species, each female may lay 40 to 90 white eggs, which hatch in 8 to 15 days. Eggs laid indoor are found in lint accumulations near the food source, in air ducts, under heavy furniture, behind baseboards, etc.

Dealing with carpet beetles

Locate the source of infestation before treatment. Carpet beetle larvae prefer to feed in dark, protected places. Check lint under baseboards, in and under upholstered furniture, in air ducts, in stuffed animals, in stored cereals or grain, in abandoned bird or wasp nests under eaves or in attics, in woollens, in clothes closets, in furs, etc. Also, check all boxes and suitcases in storage areas for the presence of beetles or damage. In all areas, cast skins may be more abundant than larvae. Adult beetles flying around windows may indicate the presence of an infestation.