

# **Carpet Beetles**

## **Advice leaflet about Carpet Beetles**

Carpet Beetles are one of the major pests of textiles. The adult beetle lives outdoors and feeds on pollen, it is the larval stage that feeds on natural textile fibres. They will feed on, and damage, woollen fabrics, carpets and clothes, even wool/synthetic mixtures, but do not attack pure synthetic fibres. The success of these beetles is attributed to central heating, giving more uniform temperatures, and the increased use of fitted carpets.

### **Appearance**

The adults are about 2-4 mm long. The colour is variable, brown or black and mottled with yellow or white marks on the back. The larval stage has a characteristic banded appearance, 4-5mm long and covered in short bristles. These are known as the Woolly Bear.

### **Life Cycle**

The adult female produces 20-100 eggs over a two-week period. These are cream coloured and about 0.5 mm long. They are deposited in suitable crevices or stuck onto a potential larval feeding site. The eggs hatch in 2-4 weeks to the distinctive woolly bear. The mature larvae are 4-5 mm long and brown with tufts of hair, especially at the posterior end. The larvae avoid light and curl up when disturbed. The larval stage can last up to 10 months, depending on humidity, temperature and the availability of food. In general, soiled materials are preferred to clean ones. Larvae hibernate over winter and pupation occurs in the spring where the larvae have fed. Pupation lasts for 10-30 days then the adults emerge. Adults live for 2-6 weeks and can fly to the flowers on which they feed, and to search for egg laying sites.

### **Control of Infestation**

These insects have a wandering habit that makes them difficult to control. Any pest control treatment must be carried out as part of a programme to remove their habitat. The first step is for you to find and remove the source of the infestation. This may be an old bird's nest, animal remains and wool based insulation or lagging or the debris that accumulates between floorboards. All sources of infestation should be removed and, if possible, burned. Regular checking and cleaning are also important. You can treat infestations yourself with a residual insecticide. When treating carpets and other furnishings, it is very important to carefully follow manufacturer's instructions to avoid causing damage. However, thorough treatment is essential to ensure that all larvae are destroyed.

## **Local Authority Service**

If you do not wish to try to deal with an infestation yourself, the Environmental Health Department does offer a service, although there is a charge for this. If you would like a Pest Control Officer to visit to treat the infestation, please telephone the department on **01799 510370** to make an appointment. A fixed standard charge is made to cover this service. Also should the initial treatment be unsuccessful within two weeks one further treatment will be carried out to at no extra cost.

**We accept the following credit/debit cards: VISA, VISA DELTA, MASTERCARD, SWITCH. Please have your details ready when requesting an appointment.**

All products used by the Council are approved for use on domestic and commercial premises under the Control of Pesticides Regulations 1986.

**Alternatively, there are a number of private pest control companies that will also do this work, and you can find more details from the local telephone directory.**