

Carpet & Fur Beetles

Problems They Cause

Textile pests **do not carry disease** and **do not bite** humans, therefore are not considered a risk to human health. However, they are a **nuisance** pest as they can cause **severe damage to textile products** such as wool, fur, leather, silk, and other natural fibres.

The damage is caused by the larval stage of the species as they feed off the keratin within the natural fibres in order to survive and grow into their adult form. If left untreated the damage they can cause to carpets and clothing can be significant; as the numbers increase the damage gets greater.

There are a number of species of moth and beetle that attack textiles. The most common ones are varied carpet beetles and clothes moths.

Commercial Control Methods

- Insecticide spray applications
- Insecticidal dusting
- Heat treatments
- Bird proofing



Larva (Wolly Bear)



Adult Carpet Beetle



Adult Fur Beetle

Pest Biology

Carpet beetles are round like a ladybird but very small (1.5mm to 4mm in length). They are dark brown or black with mottled patches of white or yellow. **Fur beetles** are the same size but have a single white spot on each wing.

Each female will lay between 20 and 100 eggs in spring and early summer on furs, wool and natural fibres. These eggs hatch in to hairy, brown larva, commonly known as woolly bears.

The **woolly bears** avoid light and curl in to a ball when approached. It is this larvae that causes damage to natural fibres, feeding until they are ready to turn in to a carpet or fur beetle. Bird nests could be a source of infestation, as can wool insulation materials.

Sometimes when there are large numbers of beetles the hairs on the larvae may cause skin irritations for some people. However this is very unusual.

What you can do to help

- Maintain good hygiene and vacuum regularly (especially in areas under storage heaters or at the skirting junction).
- Remove old / unoccupied birds' nests from eaves and loft spaces.
- Remove dead birds or rodents when found in chimneys, under floors or in loft spaces.
- Avoid storing goods with a natural fibre content (like old carpets and clothing) in roof spaces as they are potential food sources.
- Seal any holes and gaps around windows and doors that could allow them to enter.



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