

## Insect Damage

THE LARVA, or worm, stage of two species of clothes moths and four species of carpet beetles cause most of the insect damage to clothing, furs, blankets, pillows, carpets, rugs, upholstery, and furniture padding that contain animal fibers or feathers.

Those items can be a complete diet for the entire life of any of the fabric insects, but the damage they do can be prevented by using protective fabric treatments, proper storage procedures, good housekeeping practices, and effective insect-control measures.

THE TWO COMMON species of clothes moths found in the home are the webbing clothes moth and the case-making clothes moth. They look much alike.

The adult moths are yellowish or buff colored and have a wingspread of about one-half inch. They usually stay in dark, secluded places but may come out and fly aimlessly about. The small eggs are white or cream colored and are laid directly on fabrics suitable as food for the hatched larvae.

The larvae look like worms and are white with dark heads. When they first emerge, they are very small, but under favorable conditions they grow to a length of about one-half inch.

The larvae of the webbing clothes moth move about freely, spinning a silken web as they feed. The larvae of the casemaking clothes moth build a protective case around themselves, which they drag from one spot to another as they feed.

The larvae of both species remain on the material they feed on throughout their lifespan of 30 to 45 days.

THE FOUR COMMON species of carpet beetles found in homes are the common carpet beetle, the furniture carpet beetle, the varied carpet beetle, and the black carpet beetle.

The first three look much alike. The adults are small, round beetles, usually less than one-eighth inch long. They fly freely and, since they are attracted to light, may be found on window sills. They are mottled with white, yellow, brown, and black.

Each female lays about 100 tiny eggs directly on material the larvae feed on. The eggs hatch in 8 to 15 days.

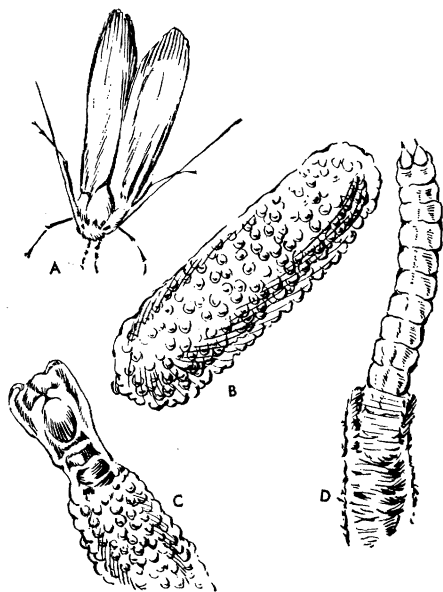
The larvae are the feeding stage. Their oval bodies are covered with brownish or black bristles that give them a fuzzy appearance, from which they get their common name, "buffalo moths." As the carpet beetle larvae grow, they shed their skins several times. In 45 to 60 days they are full grown and about one-fourth inch long.

The black carpet beetle is easily distinguished from the other three species. The adults are black. The larvae are golden to dark brown and reach a length of about one-half inch. They are slender and tapered, with a characteristic tuft of long, brown hairs at the end of the body. They live considerably longer as larvae (9 to 12 months) than do the other carpet beetles.

THE EASIEST and most effective way to protect wool clothing, rugs, blankets, and other susceptible items against fabric insects is to have them treated with a moth-resistant compound.

The simplest way of getting this built-in protection is to purchase items treated for moth resistance. Select items already treated by the manufacturer with a permanent-type, moth-resistant compound.

Some treatments resist aging, dry-cleaning, and several washings and are usually guaranteed by the manufacturer.



WEBBING CLOTHES MOTH  
 A, Adult; B, Cocoon; C, Cocoon with cast  
 pupal skin protruding;  
 D, Larva and silken feeding tube

turer for the life of the item. Others provide only temporary protection, which may disappear soon after you purchase the item. Read the label carefully.

You undoubtedly have many susceptible articles that have not been treated to withstand moths. You can have a moth-resistant treatment applied to wool clothing, blankets, and sweaters when you have them dry-cleaned and to your rugs and carpets when they are shampooed.

Such treatments are temporary and must be repeated each time the articles are cleaned.

You can treat some items yourself. There are a number of approved mothproofing solutions you can buy and apply yourself to clothing, rugs, and other items. Mothproofers are sold as liquid sprays or aerosols.

Regardless of which one you select, apply it as directed on the label.

Some labels specify that the treated garment should be drycleaned before

wearing. If you have no intention of doing so, or if there is a possibility that you may overlook having the treated suit, sweater, or blanket cleaned before it is worn, then do not select such a mothproofing compound. Pick one that will permit you to wear the treated garment either with or without drycleaning. Some of the mothproofers in this category are DDT, methoxychlor, Strobane, and Perthane.

PROPER STORAGE can be used effectively to protect woolens and other susceptible items. It is important to store only clean items and in insect-tight containers.

Soiled clothing attracts fabric insects more than clean clothing, and clothes that have been hanging around for some time may be infested. Therefore, before storing your materials, have them drycleaned or laundered.

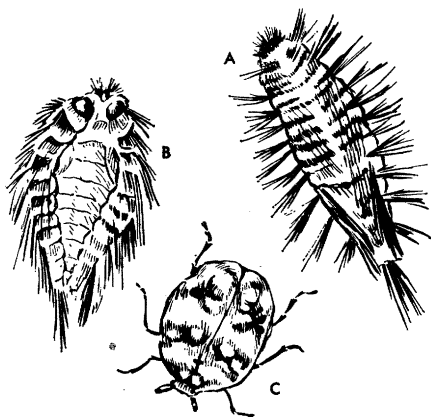
If that is not possible, hang them outdoors, brush very thoroughly, especially the seams, folds, and pockets, and let them hang in the direct sun for several hours. Thorough brushing and exposure to sunlight are effective methods of ridding woolen articles of insects.

Well-constructed chests and closets and airtight garment bags make good storage containers. Before using any of them, however, make sure they are insect tight when closed. Seal all cracks or openings with masking tape.

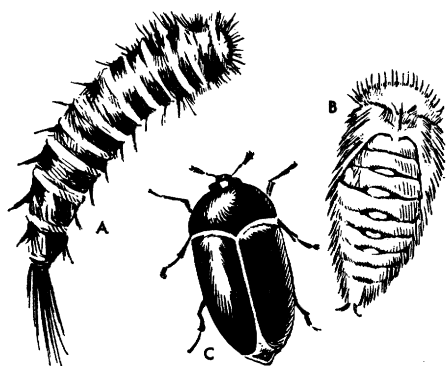
Cedar chests and cedar-lined closets provide little or no protection against insects unless they are made with red cedar heartwood three-fourths inch thick, are tightly constructed, and are less than 3 or 4 years old. To be safe, use them as any other container or closet.

For added protection, place paradichlorobenzene crystals or naphthalene flakes or balls in the storage containers before sealing the lid or door.

In a trunk-size container, use 1 pound of these chemicals. In a closet, use 1 pound for each 100 cubic feet of space. Place them high in the



**FURNITURE CARPET BEETLE**  
A, Larva; B, Pupa; C, Adult



**BLACK CARPET BEETLE**  
A, Larva; B, Pupa; C, Adult

storage container, because the vapors are heavier than air.

Large, bulky items can be wrapped in heavy kraft paper. Sprinkle naphthalene or paradichlorobenzene around the article as it is being wrapped. Then seal all edges of the wrapping paper with masking tape to make the package insect tight.

GOOD HOUSEKEEPING practices are important in preventing insect damage and in controlling insects in the home.

One of the most important practices is to get rid of old wool clothing, furs, feather pillows, and other susceptible items. Do not stick them in the attic or in the basement.

Old wool clothing and soiled wool rugs are the commonest haven of fabric insects in the home. If you must save some old garment for sentimental or other reasons, have it cleaned, and then treat it with one of the recommended protective sprays before you put it away.

The insects also live in the lint and hair that accumulate in corners; in cracks in the floor, baseboards, and molding; behind radiators; in heating or ventilator ducts and wells; and in other such places.

Thorough and frequent vacuum cleaning of all these places is recom-

mended. Cleaning removes the food on which fabric pests feed and picks up insect eggs and larvae that happen to be there. In this way you stop an infestation before it becomes serious.

Wool rugs and carpets become infested under heavy pieces of furniture, along the walls, and in places where there is little or no traffic. Pay particular attention to vacuum cleaning these places thoroughly and frequently.

After each vacuum cleaning, dispose of the sweepings carefully. They may contain insect eggs and larvae. Sweepings that stay in your cleaner for any length of time may spread the infestation throughout the house.

Inspect your rugs periodically. If you see any bare spots or if the nap of the rug seems to have been clipped down to the base, you may have the beginning of an infestation of clothes moths or carpet beetles.

Look for clothes moth webbing, for live carpet beetle larvae, or for cast skins. If you find signs of insects or insect damage, spray the rug with one of the recommended protective sprays or have it done by a commercial carpet cleaner or pest-control operator.

IF YOU FIND damage or actually see fabric insects in your home, it is best

to take steps to control the infestation as soon as possible.

Do not panic and run to the nearest drugstore or hardware store to buy the first bottle or can of insecticide you see on the shelf, rush home, and cover everything in the house with it. The spraying should come last.

First, inspect the susceptible items in your house, especially in the room or part of the house where you have found insects or damage. Find out how extensive the damage or infestation is, where it is, and, if possible, the source of the infestation. Do not forget the attic and the basement.

Discard old clothing, rugs, stuffed furniture, feather pillows, and other articles that may be sources for the infestation. For your good clothes, rugs, and other susceptible items, follow the suggestions I gave for protective treatments.

Give your house a good cleaning.

Then you are ready to spray to control the insects.

Select an insecticide that is effective in killing fabric insects and is safe to use in the home.

Some of the insecticides that have been approved for this purpose are 3 to 6 percent DDT, 2 percent chlor-dane, 3 to 5 percent of premium-grade malathion, and one-half percent of lindane. These insecticides can be purchased as oil solutions, water emulsion concentrates, or as pressurized sprays. Aerosols are not recommended for this purpose.

Apply liquid sprays with a sprayer that produces a continuous coarse mist. If only a small area is to be covered, the insecticide can be applied with a paintbrush about 2 inches wide.

Do not apply the insecticide indiscriminately.

It should be applied only on the surfaces where the insects may be or are likely to crawl—along the edges of wall-to-wall carpets; in closets; behind radiators, baseboards, and moldings; and in corners, cracks, and other hard-to-clean places.

Before treating the closets, take the

clothing out, vacuum-clean floors and shelves, then apply the insecticide to corners, to cracks in the floors and walls, along baseboards, around shelves, and at ends of clothes rods.

Remember that most insecticides are poisonous to people and to animals. Keep them where children and pets cannot reach them. Oil-base insecticides are flammable and may discolor certain floor coverings, such as asphalt tile.

Before you use an insecticide, read and follow the precautions and directions that are printed on the container label.

If the infestation persists, repeat the procedure every 3 months until it is cleared up. If the infestation is heavy and widespread, a professional pest-control operator may be needed. (HAMILTON LAUDANI)

## Drycleaning

AS THE DIRECTOR of Consumer Relations of the National Institute of Drycleaning, I give some reasons why an article should be drycleaned by a professional drycleaner.

Many types of soil are not removed from fabrics by water. Drycleaning solvents remove oily and greasy soil more readily than water.

The removal of spots and stains requires a knowledge of fabrics, dyes, and finishes in relation to the spotting reagent used, and the methods and techniques required to effect removal.

Specialized finishing equipment used by drycleaners is designed to accommodate the intricate garment details that cannot be pressed by hand iron on the home ironing board.

Cleaning a garment in a drycleaning solvent rather than water has the