

# PestGazette

*Brought to you by ABC Pest Control Company*



## Winterize Your Home and Save Money

- **Have your heating equipment serviced** to make sure that it is operating efficiently. Improperly tuned heating equipment can waste hundreds of dollars a year in fuel or electricity.
- **Clean your chimney** if you have a fireplace. Experts suggest that you have the chimney cleaned after burning four cords of wood, more frequently if you use wood softer than oak. Besides being a fire hazard, dirty chimneys can smoke back into the house, forcing you to open windows and doors, which let heat out.
- **Turn off outside water faucets** at a cutoff or insulate the hose bibs to prevent pipes from bursting.
- **Weather-strip all doors and windows.** Make sure that all windows are fully closed.
- **Keep the thermostat set low at night.** Setting the thermostat back 8 degrees will save 8-10 percent of heating costs according to the U.S. Department of Energy. If you have a heat pump, you might need a special set back thermostat.
- **Keep your garage door closed** when it is cold, especially if you have a heated room above the garage. This will also help to keep rodents out.
- **Seal cracks and holes** in foundations with cement or silicone based caulking.
- **Seal any area larger than a crack with steel wool** or copper wool and then foam insulation. The insulation will keep the cold out and the wool will keep rodents from entering your home.
- **Keep firewood outside** and bring it in only when you are going to burn it. Not only will you keep a huge cold mass outside but also you will reduce chances of insects coming in with the wood and becoming active as they heat up to room temperature.

Call today!  
410-555-6000

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## Protect Your Wardrobe from Fabric Pests

**W**inter is the time when you take out those heavier clothes you stored away for the summer. If you find there are small jagged or frayed holes where the fur or wool liner of a coat looks worn, you are dealing with the larva of a fabric pest. The most common fabric pests are Varied  
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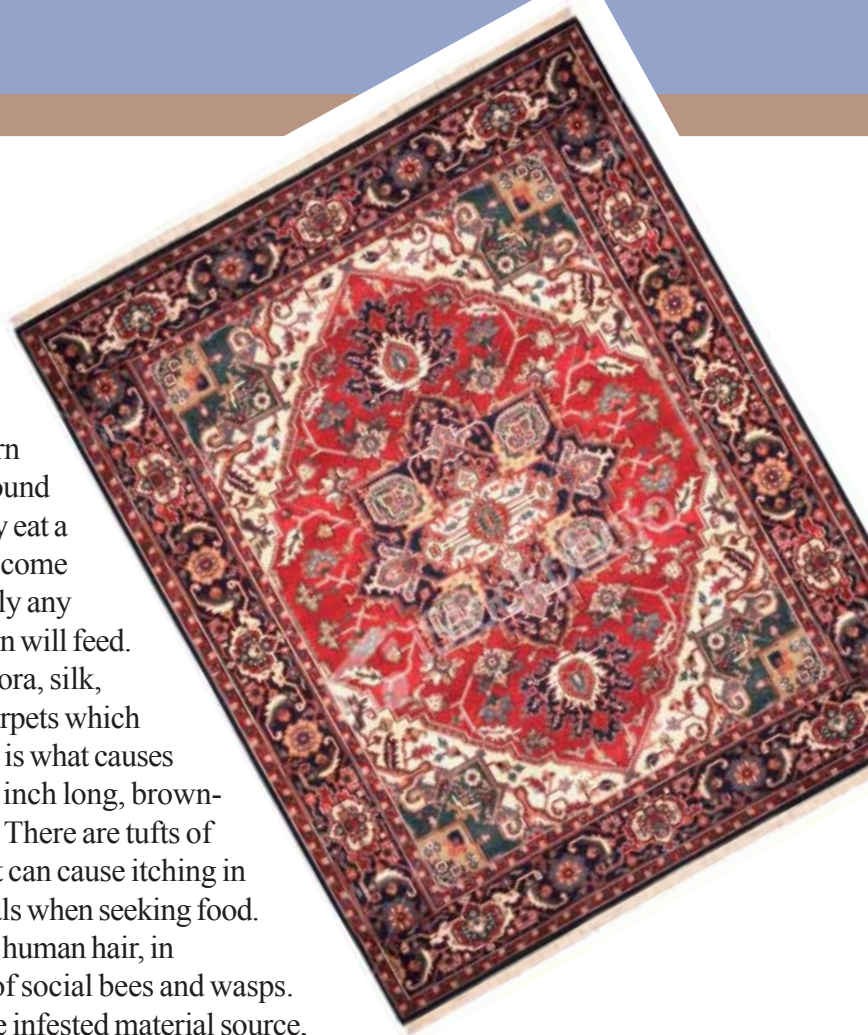
## Fabric Pests (continued from page 1)

Carpet Beetles who received their name because of the color pattern on their back.

Adults are small, hard-bodied, oval beetles, about 1/8 inch long. Their body is black, covered with a pattern of yellow and white scales. Varied Carpet Beetles are found throughout the world. Adults are strong fliers and mainly eat a variety of outdoor flowers, pollen, or shrubs. They may come into houses or businesses and deposit their eggs on nearly any natural animal or plant materials, on which the larvae then will feed.

They select protein based fabrics such as wool, angora, silk, hair, furs, feathers, leather, or as their name indicates, carpets which may contain any natural protein fiber. The larval feeding is what causes all of the damage. Larvae of these beetles are up to 1/4 inch long, brown-to-black, and covered with a lot of yellow-brown hairs. There are tufts of special hairs (hastisetæ) on top, near their back end that can cause itching in humans. Larvae may burrow through packaging materials when seeking food. They are found in bird nests, accumulations of pet fur or human hair, in accumulated dead insects or lint, and even in the nests of social bees and wasps. These larvae may wander a long way from the site of the infested material source, when they are looking for a place to pupate, or when their population is large.

The key to controlling Varied Carpet Beetles, and similar fabric pests, is to find the primary site of the infestation and eliminate it. A thorough inspection by our technician should be followed by good sanitation practices. Infested materials such as rugs or tapestries may be treated or dry cleaned using the same temperature ranges as suggested later in this issue for killing stored products pests. We are ready and able to help you pinpoint any such infestation by these beetles, eliminate it, and advise you on their future prevention. A cleaning of the home or office air duct system may also rid the source that is supporting the infestation. ■



*[Varied Carpet Beetles] select protein based fabrics such as wool, angora, silk, hair, furs, feathers, leather, or carpets which may contain natural protein fiber.*



## Pests in the Pantry

If you have ever poured cereal into a bowl then watched with alarm as several pieces began to crawl up the side of the bowl, you may have already discovered stored product infesting beetles. A variety of small insects live and feed on the same foods we do. Adults of many of these pests fly toward lights and may be found in other rooms or floors quite a distance from your food storage areas. These pests do eat at least a small amount of the food they infest, but their presence, their droppings, cast skins, and certain chemical excretions contaminate much more of the food and sometimes cause allergies in those persons who ingest them. ■

## Is There a Mouse in the House?

**B**y this time each year in the U.S., domestic rodents will have already found places they plan to spend the winter; and this may very well be in your home with you! The **house mouse** (*Mus musculus*, L. - Latin for "little thief") is the most common pest in and around human dwellings and businesses. They damage and destroy materials by gnawing wires, eating your food, and attacking decorations such as holiday wreaths. They account for many unexplained fires in structures because they can chew through wires. To some, mice may look cuddly, but they are known to carry over 20 different pathogens of human disease, not to mention their association with ectoparasites (ticks and fleas).

The house mouse is about three inches in length, and is gray with dull white belly fur. An adult weighs about an ounce, but eats often and is constantly leaving droppings and urine droplets as it forages for food, mates and harborage. Mice also breed rapidly. A house mouse is mature within 35 days after birth, and can have a first litter of up to eight pups at 60 days old. Individuals usually live only about a year, however, if all their offspring were to survive and reproduce at a similar rate, one pair of house mice could potentially produce a population of more than 500 young in one year!

Mice are acrobatic and can jump about a foot straight up from a standing position; they can jump down more than six feet without getting hurt. An adult mouse can squeeze through a crack or hole as small as 1/4 inch (the size of diameter of a #2 pencil) and can quickly climb

straight up an eight-foot wall of brick or wood paneling in less than half a minute. Even though one mouse doesn't eat much, as their population grows, they can eat a surprising amount of food. They can also damage food containers, and their droppings and urine contaminate a lot more food than they eat. In one year, one mouse produces up to 18,000 droppings; it will deposit hundreds of micro-droplets of urine every day as it marks its trails.

If you see mice or other rodents, or their signs such as droppings in your house or business, don't panic. The wisest thing to do is to call a pest professional. We can help determine what rodents you may have, where they are entering the structure, and the extent of the problem. We can help you plan and carry out an effective rodent control program that will protect you, your family, your customers, and your property. ■

If you see mice, other rodents, or their droppings, don't panic. The wisest thing to do is to call a pest professional.



# Common Invaders ... Check the Line Up



*Red Flour Beetle*



*Confused Flour Beetle*

## Red Flour Beetles

These beetles that get their name from their red color, are small, about 1/8 inch long, slender, reddish-brown beetles with wing covers, and can only fly short distances. Their head is held straight forward, with compound eyes and antennae visible. Their antennae have an abrupt three-segmented "club" at the end. The sides of their thorax are rounded. These beetles feed on a range of processed grain materials such as flour and various cereals. Although this species probably originated in the Indo-Australian region, they are one of the most common stored product beetles, and can be found worldwide. In the U.S., they are most common in the southern states. They are attracted to lights, and also to flour that has high moisture content.

## Confused Flour Beetles

The confused flour beetle is about 1/8 inch long, slender, reddish brown beetles with hard wing covers. The adults have wings, but they have never been observed to fly. These beetles look so similar to the red flour beetles that their common name comes from their often being "confused" with red flour beetles. Their head is held straight forward, with compound eyes and antennae visible. Their antennae have a gradual, four-segmented "club" at the end. The sides of their thorax are almost straight.

These beetles feed on a range of processed grain materials such as flour and various cereals. Although this species probably originated in Africa, they are now one of the most common stored products beetles and are distributed worldwide. In the U.S., they are much more common in northern states than red flour beetles. They have also been found infesting old, molded rodent baits.

## Beetles Be Gone

To eliminate these pests you must find the source of the infestation. Check packages you seldom use, items like cereals, grain products, nuts, flour, raisins, spices, dry pet food and birdseed. Make it a habit to thoroughly inspect all such items when you first bring them home from your grocery store. Pay special attention to all of the same items, and brand names, from the same store where any previously infested items were bought.

Store all susceptible foods in tightly closed containers. You should consider heating or freezing all susceptible food items you have had for 60 days or longer. Heating infested materials to at least 140 degrees Fahrenheit for more than one hour will kill all stored product pests. Make sure that the middle of the material is held at that temperature for at least that period of time, or longer. Freezing the food item throughout to 0 degrees Fahrenheit or below for at least four days will also kill all life stages. You should place dry food in a ziplock type plastic bag before freezing; this prevents condensation after removal from the freezer and subsequent thawing. Most foods can be eaten safely after pantry pests have been killed and removed, such as by hand sorting or sifting. For more information visit the National Pest Management Association's Web site at: [www.pestworld.org](http://www.pestworld.org). ■

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