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Cigarette beetle *Lasioderma serricorne*



GENERAL INFORMATION

The Cigarette Beetle is worldwide in distribution. It is also called the Tobacco Beetle because of the damage it inflicts on stored tobacco (e.g. tobacco leaves, cigars, chewing tobacco, cigarettes). They can also be found in food storage areas and are known to chew through books, manuscripts, furniture fabrics and other organic materials.

SIGNS OF INFESTATION

Look for the adult beetles and the fine powder they leave behind after feeding. The eggs and larvae can also be detected on or near the food source. Cigarette beetle adult males and females are attracted to UV light sources and can be monitored in insect light traps.

FOOD SOURCES

The Cigarette Beetle feeds on dried tobacco products (e.g. cigars, cigarettes), stored food products (e.g. cereal products, pasta, rice, dried fruit, seeds, dried fish) and many other organic materials (e.g. dried botanical specimens, book bindings, medicines and upholstered furniture that is covering flax tow or straw).

LIFE CYCLE

The life cycle of a cigarette beetle is dependent on the temperature (i.e. the lower the temperature the slower the process) and food source. The female beetle will lay approximately 100 eggs randomly on or close to the food source. The eggs will hatch in 6 to 10 days. The larval stage lasts for 35 to 70 days, during which time the larva feeds on the surrounding food source and avoids the light. The



DIAGNOSTIC MORPHOLOGY

Adults:

- Adults are 1/10 inch long (2-3 mm)
- They have an oval shape
- They are reddish-brown in color
- The wing covers are covered with little hairs but appear smooth overall
- The head of the beetle is bent downward at almost a right angle to the body
- The antennae are notched like the teeth of a saw

Immature Stage:

- Larvae are approximately 3/16 of an inch long
- They curl round and form a C shape
- The body is white in color and is covered in long hairs
- The head and legs are brown in color



pupae stage takes 7 to 21 days. The adult beetles will live up to approximately 28 days. There can be overlapping generations especially in warmer climates.

CONTROL & TREATMENT

The best solution for controlling Cigarette beetles is to engage in scrupulous housekeeping. Food stores should be inspected on a regular basis and the food should be kept in insect proof containers. If an infestation is discovered the best treatment appears to be to isolate the infested material and throw it out. The area where the infested material was stored should be vacuumed and the vacuum bag should also be thrown out. If the infested material e.g. manuscript cannot be destroyed then various museum based treatments can be applied.

Fact Sheet: Cigarette beetle

Photo credit: Adult/pupa and larva- Clemson University - USDA Cooperative Extension Slide Series, Bugwood.org

Photo credit: Adult only- The National Folk Museum of Korea - Jinsook OH