

Drugstore Beetle *Stegobium paniceum* (Linnaeus)



GENERAL INFORMATION

The Drugstore Beetle is worldwide in distribution and is closely related to the Cigarette Beetle. They were found among herbal medicines and pharmaceuticals, thus the name. They can also be found in food storage areas and are known to consume almost anything, including Strychnine.

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.

FOOD SOURCES

The Drugstore beetle feeds on pharmaceuticals, 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, upholstered furniture).

LIFE CYCLE

The life cycle of a Drugstore 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 a 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 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 Drugstore 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.

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 have lengthwise lines of pits giving them a striated look. The head of the beetle is deflected downward toward the body
- Each of the antennae has three enlarged segments at the ends

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 short hairs
- The head and legs are brown in color