Exopest®
A.B.N. 43 024 354 504
The Pest Control People

80-86 Buckhurst St, South Melbourne 3205 T: (03) 8696 9000 E: info@exopest.com.au W: exopest.com.au

Clothes Moths

Clothes moths are real pests in the home.

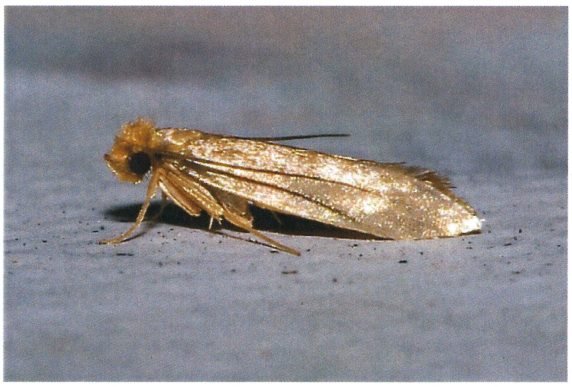
They attack a whole range of common household items. Woollen carpets, furniture, bedding, curtains, jumpers, blankets, woollen suits, and accessories. Plus - stuffing in bedding, fur coats, antique dolls, and feathers incorporated into hats and dusters.

Damage is caused by the larval stage or grub of the clothes moth as they feed on items made from natural and sometimes synthetic fibres.

In the outdoor environment, they attack animal products including pollen, hair, feathers, dead insects, and dried animal remains.

Given the damage to many valuable household fabric items, it is important to control clothes moths at the earliest sign of infestation.

Webbing Clothes Moth:



Description:

Two of the more common clothes moth species in Melbourne are:

- Webbing Clothes Moth (*Tinea pellionella*)
- Case-Making Clothes Moth (*Tineola bisselliella*)

Of the two species, Webbing Clothes Moth is the most common in Melbourne.

Adult moths are long, slender, and delicate looking, generally 6 to 10 mm. Webbing clothes moths are a yellowish-beige with a metallic sheen, whereas case-making clothes moths are a dull, mottled-pattern of light and medium browns.

Clothes moth larvae are long, thin, and tubular. The body is soft with a cream to yellowish-cream colour. At the front of the body is a distinct reddish-brown head capsule and chewing mouthparts. Larvae produce fine silk threads from the mouth, manufactured by specialised glands in the body.

Webbing clothes moth larvae have no eyes, while case-making clothes moth larvae have two simple eyes on either side of the head.

Both case-making and webbing clothes moth larvae build tube like cocoon from spun silk which act as camouflage and physical protection. Case-making clothes moth larvae carry their cocoon on their back. As the larvae travel and feed, the cocoon picks up material covering it in fabric fibres, dust, and hairs. Larvae are often found climbing up BIR's, walls and curtains near a food source. Webbing clothes moth larvae's cocoon-home is stationary and is often covered in fibres from the nearby food source and frass.

Lifecycle:

Adults emerge from the pupal stage (grub into moth) and mate. Eggs are laid close to infested area - females lay up to 50 eggs and as they do not feed adult moths do not live long.

Eggs are oval-shaped, very small are less than 1 mm long. Eggs are laid on or near a suitable food source for the larvae and hatch between 4 to 21 days. Hatching time very dependent on environmental conditions - moisture heat etc. Eggs hatch into grubs and shed a skin at each of their 4 moults of growth development (4 instars).

Eggs hatch into larvae, which look like little creamy coloured worms with a dark head.

Newly emerged larvae are about 1 mm long, but grow up to 12 mm. This is the destructive phase, as larvae have chewing mouth parts and feed on natural materials containing the protein keratin such as cashmere, wool, silk, feathers, furs, and leather.

Larvae are unlikely to feed on synthetic fibres, but it is still possible if they are soiled with food stains, skin cells and human secretions like sweat.

Larvae create silken threads which looks like webbing.

Webbing Clothes Moth larvae live between 1 month and up to 2.5 years, if triggered into a hibernate state. The case-making clothes moth grub generally live for 2 to 3 months. Pupal stage is 8 to 10 days, dependent on the season before adult moths emerge.

Behaviour:

Female clothes moths prefer to walk rather than fly, while males can flutter about seeking a mate. However, clothes moths are still considered weak flyers. Adult clothes moths prefer to stay in the darker areas of a room and are not ordinarily attracted to lights like other moths. If you do see a clothes moth in flight, it is probably a male in search of females.

Habitat:

Larvae prefer fibres which are dirty or stained and are often found in crevices, cracks and seams of household fabric items such as:

- Carpets - especially along the edges.
- Wool insulation (Big problem if roof void full of wool insulation – makes full control literally impossible as insulation material so deep).
- Furniture, Bedding &, Curtains.
- Clothing and accessories, especially cuffs or collars
- Tapestries & Musical instruments, especially the pads in woodwind instruments and felt found in pianos

Treatment for Clothes Moths

Wash garments and linen infested with eggs on hot wash cycle washing machine and then into the drier for at least 30 minutes. Alternatively, hang clothes on the line in full sun and brush fabric item as this will cause the eggs and larvae to fall.

Ensure areas are well vacuumed, especially under furniture, beds, and along skirting edges.

Once vacuumed - Exopest apply residual water-based insecticide spray treatment to floor edges, carpet surfaces, cracks crevices etc. Owner should move items way from the wall, and out from under the beds, so we can get good treatment access.

Also, Exopest can supply couple of Clothes Moth Pheromone sticky boards that attract the male moth and thus stop the breeding life cycle. Traps last for about 6 months. Traps can be hung in the open or in the wardrobe.