

Dermeestid Beetle (Carpet, Skin, etc. Beetles)

Order: Coleoptera

Family: Dermestidae

Genus/Species: Spp.

Description: Dermestid Beetles vary in size from less than 1/8" to 1/2" and are elongate to broadly oval. The head is more or less concealed from above, often with a median ocellus simple eye. They are black or brownish, often covered with scales or hair, forming a pattern. The antennae are short, clubbed and fitting in grooves below the sides of the pronotum (upper surface of prothorax).

Habitat: These beetles are primarily scavengers and can generally be found on or in their required foodstuff. The larvae are scavengers and feed primarily on dried skin and other animal remains such as fur, feathers, wool, leather and hides. They also eat carpets, silk, dried meats, cheese, dead insects and taxidermied animals. Some feed on cork, seeds, and grain or cereal products.

Life Cycle: After mating, the females enter houses and deposit eggs on a suitable foodstuff. The eggs hatch in about 18 days. The larvae are hairy and usually have several tufts of hair. They feed rapidly on a wide variety of organic matter and molt numerous times over seven to 11 months. The pupa forms in the last larval skin and the adult emerges in 10–14 days. When the adults emerge they are attracted to light and fly to light colored flowers where they feed on nectar and pollen. They are most prevalent in late spring.

Economic Importance & Management: The larvae of the Dermestid Beetle are a serious pest and annually cause hundreds of millions of dollars worth of damage to animal and plant material. The Carpet Beetle is the most destructive household dermestid. Management must begin with sanitation measures such as vacuuming and washing and proper storage to insure reduction of larval food sources. Infected items may be frozen at 32° for six days to kill larvae or eggs.

References: *Peterson Field Guide: Insects*, Donald J. Borror & Richard E. White
Peterson Field Guide: Beetles, Richard E. White
Insects, Spiders and Other Terrestrial Arthropods, McGaven
Pest Control Technician's Field Guide for the Management of Structure Infesting Beetles, Stoy A. Hedges & Mark S. Lacy
Photos: OSU Ken Gray Insect Collection



Black Carpet Beetle



Varied Carpet Beetle



Larval Stage