

Pest Fact sheet No 1

Varied carpet beetle

Name Varied carpet beetle

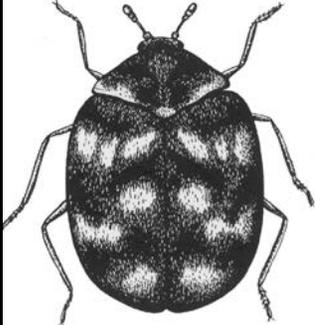
Latin name *Anthrenus verbasci*

Size  Adult 2 mm-3 mm long

 Larvae 0.5 mm – 5 mm long

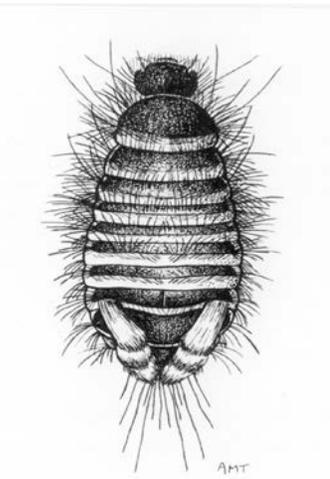
Identification features

Adult



Small round beetles covered with grey and gold scales. Prominent head with clubbed antennae.

Larva



Short and fat with bands of darker hairs. Often called 'woolly bears'

Life cycle

Adult beetles fly well in warm weather and may frequently be found on window sills. In the UK they are often found outside in late spring and early summer where they mate on flowers, such as hogweed and spirea.

Females lay batches of eggs secreted in cracks and crevices. When the larvae first hatch they are extremely small, less than 0.5 mm, and they can gain entry to cupboards and drawers through very small cracks. When they are larger, they will wander around and may attack more than one object.

The larvae may take 1 or 2 years to complete their growth and each new cycle starts after they pupate and change into adults in the Spring.

Signs of damage



As the larvae grow, they leave empty hairy cast skins, or husks, which may be the first signs of beetle attack.



They produce pellets of excreta, called frass, which may be found under or near infested objects

Materials damaged

The larvae are voracious feeders and will rapidly make neat holes in woollen textiles, animal specimens, fur and feathers.



They will also graze on animal glue in book bindings and picture frames. Clean cotton materials are not normally attacked, although larvae may bore through this on their way out of a feather cushion.

Finding the source

Carpet beetle larvae attack carpets, upholstery, clothing and other textiles. The larvae wander around but are often in dark and hidden places in crevices and folds where dirt accumulates. They will feed on dead insects, especially flies, and are also found in natural situations such as birds' nests, wasp nests and animal burrows.

Similar species

Guernsey carpet beetle *Anthrenus sarnicus*
Carpet beetle *Anthrenus fuscus*
Australian carpet beetle *Anthrenocerus australis*
(See pest fact sheet No 12)