

A Bug's Life

Carpet beetle

Family: Dermestidae

Fun facts

- Larvae feed on animal hair, feathers, fur, hides, fabrics, rugs, preserved specimens, dried goods and food
- Adult feed on plant nectar
- Good fliers find their way inside
- Attracted to light when indoors, gather on windowsills
- Larval hairs can be irritants of skin and cause GI distress if swallowed

Identification

Larvae: Worm-like with a lot of hair and spiny bristles, some with tufts of hair, others with long hair at tail end

Beetles: Small, hard, oval-shaped beetles, black or multi-colored scales, sometimes dark with white hairs on wing covers, can be various sizes

Management

- Chemical treatment is usually not necessary
- Vacuum beetles, lint, and pet hair
- Clean fabrics and carpets
- Inspect items in storage
- Remove insect or bird nests
- Locate source of infestation (with larvae, cast skins) and discard
- Freeze infested items for 10-14 days



Varied carpet beetle

Photos: J. Green