

We have put together the following guidance on the different kinds of pests that we treat.

Contents

- **Ants**
- **Australian Spider Beetle**
- **Biscuit Beetle also known as the Bread Beetle**
- **Carpet Beetle & larvae (woolly bears)**
- **Cockroaches**
- **Fleas**
- **Mice**
- **Rats**
- **Wasps**

Pest Control Guidance Document - Ants

Months of Activity: Can be all year round, but mainly April to October

Description

There are 41 different species of ant living in the UK; however it is the garden or black ant (*Lasius Niger*) that causes the most common problems in our homes. The black ant is 3.5 to 5mm long and dark brown to black in colour. They usually nest outdoors in lawns, flowerbeds, under paving stones and in walls. The black ant is not a health hazard, but can cause a nuisance. They enter homes in search of sweet foods, getting in through small gaps in masonry, doors and windows, and when they do find their way in to our homes, they do so in large numbers. Ants are not just pests they also feed off insects and act as scavengers in the garden.



Lifecycle

The queen ant lays eggs in late spring, which hatch into larvae after 3-4 weeks. The queen rears the larvae for three weeks after which they pupate. From the pupae emerge the first brood of worker ants, which forage for food and tend subsequent broods. Winged male and female ants emerge between July and August and mating takes place on the wing during this time, after which the males die. The mated females shed their wings and dig a cell in the soil where they stay until the following spring.

Home treatment

You can treat ants yourself with crawling insect insecticide, many of which can be purchased from local DIY stores and garden centres. Apply the insecticide to the entrance of the nest and wherever ants have entered your home. Inside your house, you should check behind the sink unit, skirting boards, around doors window frames, waste pipes and other pipes, trying to create a band of insecticide over which the ants would have to cross to enter your home. Make sure you also apply the insecticide to small cracks and crevices - as ants can get through very small gaps.

To make sure you completely get rid of the problem, you will need to find their nest. Follow the ant trails and look for small entrance holes in the ground surrounded by small piles of fine earth. Once you have found the nest, follow the instructions on the insecticide about dealing with ant's nests.

Please read the label and follow the instructions on any insecticide carefully.

Does the Council provide treatment for ants? Yes

Pest Control Guidance Document - Australian Spider Beetle

Months of Activity: April - September

Description

Australian spider beetles arrived in Europe and the UK from Australia in around 1900, and can now be found more or less everywhere. They are general scavengers and will feed on a variety of items including cereals, seeds, flour, meat, dried fruits and vegetables, fish food, dead insects, rodent droppings and old wood. Common sites of infestation in the home include wall voids and drop ceilings, as the infestation usually originates in a birds nest.



Appearance

Adult spider beetles are minute oval or cylindrical insects with long legs resembling giant mites or small spiders. The head is often hidden when viewed from above. They are 1/16 to 3/16 inch long and are brownish-black in colour. The larvae are cream in colour with short legs. They resemble the size and shape of a grub.

Lifecycle

The female lays about 100 opalescent, sticky eggs, singly or in small groups, over a period of 3 to 4 weeks. Food and debris adhere to the eggs. The fleshy larva (which can grow up to 1/8 inch long), covered with fine hairs, is strongly curved, cream coloured and rolls up into a tight ball when disturbed. It can chew its way through sacking, cellophane, or cardboard, and can hollow out a chamber in adjacent woodwork when making a place in which to pupate. Pupation takes place in a tough, spherical, thin-walled cocoon. The adult may remain in this cocoon as long as 3 weeks after emergence. The average total lifespan of an Australian spider beetle is 12 months.

Home treatment

The source of infestation should be traced and eliminated. Old bird's nests should be removed and destroyed. Good housekeeping and hygiene practices should be put into place, such as checking food items and ensuring that food areas are kept clean.

A regular spray treatment may be required near wall / floor junctions with a residual insecticide over a period of about three months. However, the spray will only kill the adults and the larvae but it doesn't kill the egg or the pupae, so repeated treatments are likely to be required.

Always make sure you read and follow the instructions on the product label carefully.

Does the Council provide treatment for Australian Spider Beetle? Yes

Pest Control Guidance Document - Biscuit Beetle also known as the Bread Beetle

Months of Activity: All year round

Description:

The Biscuit Beetle is found worldwide but more commonly in temperate latitudes. It is common throughout the UK, especially in food storage and retailing premises, and is frequently encountered in a domestic property.



Appearance:

They are small reddish-brown insects, only about 3mm long, which attack stored foods in domestic cupboard and larders. Very similar in appearance and closely related to the Common Furniture Beetle (Woodworm), these insects can easily be confused or misidentified.

Lifecycle:

Females will lay eggs either in food or in crevices near to it. The eggs hatch into larvae, which wander around and crawl into tiny spaces to reach food. They can survive without food for up to 8 days. The larvae pupate in cocoons, often within the food, for 1 or 2 weeks and then hatch in to adults. The adults bore their way through food or packaging to emerge, making holes that can look like woodworm. Adult beetles do not eat, instead they wander about for 3 - 4 weeks during which time they will breed and lay more eggs. They will often wander or fly far from the original site, and may be found on work surfaces and other locations around the room. They may sometimes be found on window, where they are attracted by light.

Home treatment:

The source of infestation should be traced and eliminated. Good housekeeping and hygiene practices should be put into place, such as checking food items and ensuring that food areas are kept clean. Any foodstuffs that are infested with biscuit beetles should be thrown away and the area thoroughly cleaned. Old bird's nests should be removed and destroyed. If you choose to resolve the issue yourself, use an insecticide on the affected items / areas using a product labelled for biscuit beetle control. Minor infestations can be dealt with by using a crawling insect spray, paying particular attention to treating cracks and crevices. Heavy infestations in food shops and factories may require professional help.

For further information visit the [British Pest Control Association](#)

Always make sure you read and follow the instructions on the product label carefully.

Does the Council provide treatment for Biscuit Beetle also known as the Bread Beetle? Yes

Pest Control Guidance Document - Carpet Beetle & larvae (woolly bears)

Months of Activity: All year round

Description:

These fibre attacking beetles do not carry disease and do not bite, therefore are not considered a risk to human health. They are a nuisance pest as they can cause damage to textile products such as wool, fur, leather, silk and other natural fibres. You may see adult beetles or the larvae (woolly bears). Adults will sometimes be found in groups on windowsills as they are attracted to daylight.



Appearance:

Carpet beetles are small, round and about the size of a ladybird (0.15cm to 0.4cm in length). They are dark brown or black with mottled patches of white or yellow.

Lifecycle:

Each female will lay between 20 and 100 eggs in spring and early summer on furs, wool and natural fibres. These eggs hatch in to hairy, brown larvae, commonly known as woolly bears. The woolly bears avoid light and curl in to a ball when approached. It is this larva that causes damage to natural fibres, feeding until they are ready to turn in to a carpet beetle.



Home treatment:

Good hygiene - prevention is really the best form of cure.

Infested areas should be thoroughly vacuumed, paying particular attention to cracks and crevices. Old birds' nests in lofts and eaves should be removed.

Use insecticides approved for the treatment of crawling insect pests. Pay particular attention to cracks and crevices and items such as woollen carpets that may provide food sources for the larvae. When using a pesticide on a fabric, test a small area before applying a full treatment.

For further information visit the [British Pest Control Association](#)

Always make sure you read and follow the instructions on the product label carefully.

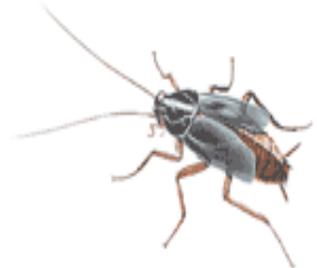
Does the Council provide treatment for Carpet Beetle? Yes

Pest Control Guidance Document - Cockroaches

Months of Activity: All year round

Description

Cockroaches need to be effectively controlled as they contaminate food with their excrement, give out an unpleasant odour, and many people can get allergic skin reactions to them. Cockroaches are large robust insects with 'whip like' antennae and two pairs of wings. The most common species found in the UK are the Oriental and German cockroaches, and can gather together in large numbers if left unchecked.



Cockroaches like warm and humid conditions, similar to those found in a typical home, which can give them a good source of food as well as shelter. They are nocturnal, spending the day in such areas as sinks, drains, and the back of cupboards and around fridge motors. Oriental cockroaches are often found in cooler and less humid areas such as drains and basements. They can thrive in buildings with service ducts and complex plumbing.

Life Cycle

Oriental Cockroach

The female lays her eggs in a capsule containing up to 16 eggs and carries it to an area where the young can find food. The eggs hatch into small versions of the adults, or nymphs, after six to twelve weeks. The nymphs (which resemble the adults except for lack of wings) take between ten months and two years to grow to adulthood. Adults live for about 18 weeks.



German Cockroach

The egg capsules of German cockroaches contain up to 32 eggs. The female carries the egg case for some time and drops it when the eggs are close to hatching. The nymphs take approximately 14 weeks to grow into adults and can live for approximately 34 weeks.

Control

High standards of hygiene can stop cockroaches from getting food while sealing cracks and crevices, especially in areas where food is prepared, can deny the insects shelter. If you live in a block of properties, the treatment will often need to be completed on a block basis.

Home treatment

You can treat cockroaches yourself using cockroach insecticide, applying it to areas where cockroaches can shelter such as cracks, and around refrigerators and washing machines. You must read and follow the instructions on the product label carefully. However given the significance and the potential extent of cockroach infestations, professional advice and treatment is advised.

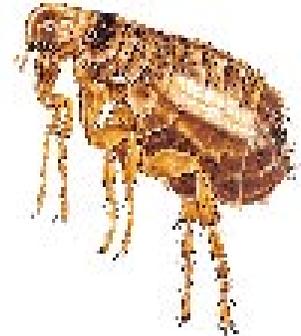
Does the Council provide treatment for cockroaches? Yes

Pest Control Guidance Document - Fleas

Months of Activity: All year round

Description

Adult fleas are classed as parasites, living off warm-blooded animals. Different species of flea live on different animals. Cat fleas are approximately 2-3mm size, brownish in colour, and are responsible for the majority of flea infestations. Fleas have increased in numbers in recent years, which has been caused by an increase in the number of people keeping pets and by the tendency for pet owners to neglect cleaning their pet's bedding properly.



Central heating can provide the necessary warmth needed for fleas to breed and carpets can provide relatively undisturbed environments for flea larvae to develop. Flea bites appear as a tiny dark red spot surrounded by a reddened area which can be intensely irritating and usually persists for one or two days.

Life cycle

Flea eggs are about 0.5mm long, pearly-white in colour and are laid on the pet or in its bedding. 4-8 eggs are laid after each the flea feeds, and therefore a single female can produce between 800-1000 eggs during her lifetime - which may be as long as two years. The eggs hatch in about 1 week into larvae which live in dark, humid places such as animal bedding and carpet fluff, feeding on debris and adult flea excrement. At worst, a cat's bedding can support up to 8000 immature and 2000 adult fleas. After 2-3 weeks, the larvae spin cocoons and pupate and may spend winter in this state. The adult flea will then be stimulated to emerge by the vibrations set up by a passing host. Development from egg to adult is normally completed in 4 weeks but at low temperatures will take much longer.

Home treatment

Regular cleaning denies fleas breeding sites and significantly contributes to their control. Thoroughly clean your entire home, removing debris from all cracks and crevices. You can use domestic insecticides to treat your home, but before you start, you should thoroughly clean your home with a vacuum cleaner. Placing a small quantity of insecticidal dust onto a carpet and vacuuming it up will control any fleas that may get sucked into the vacuum bag. After this treatment, avoid vacuuming for between 7 and 10 days. Pets such as cats or dogs should be treated using veterinary products, which can be obtained from a local vet.

Always make sure you read and follow the instructions on the product label carefully.

Pets' bedding must also be thoroughly cleaned and washed.

Does the Council provide treatment for Fleas? Yes

Pest Control Guidance Document - Mice

Description

House mice can live and breed in houses, buildings and other structures such as garden sheds, which give them protection from cold and wet weather, and where they can access food, water and harbourage. Although an abundant supply of food is preferable, house mice can survive on relatively poor diets, eating between 3 to 4 grams of food a day and can survive without access to free water, obtaining their daily needs from their food.



The ideal environments for house mice are buildings with dead spaces and harbourages free from disturbance and close to food and water. They are extremely good climbers, and can climb walls, pipes, cavities and ducting. They have very hard front teeth (incisors), which can penetrate materials as hard as concrete, lead and aluminium. This can result in expensive damage and even fires when electric cables are damaged.

House mice like to know the area where they live and like to familiarise themselves with their home surroundings; but dependent upon other physical factors, this activity is often restricted to a radius of up to 10m. They use the same familiar pathways and therefore produce 'smear marks' by the continual rubbing of their fur against surfaces. In urban areas, house mice are able to breed throughout the year, and can produce anywhere between 5 and 10 litters - each consisting of about 4-8 young.

They can live for more than two years, though the average life span is about 10 months. House mice are inquisitive and have sporadic and unpredictable feeding habits, feeding from many different sites each night, rather than 1 or 2 sites close to their nest. They can feed on almost anything, but generally prefer cereal-based foods such as grass and canary seed

How to Prevent Infestations

- Don't leave any open food out in the kitchen overnight
- Remove all food and waste spillages as they occur
- Empty food waste bins often
- Empty bins regularly & ensure that spillages/refuse does not accumulate in the yard/garden
- Repair structural defects in the house to prevent mice gaining access to your home (mice can squeeze through gaps in excess of 5mm.)

If signs of infestation are noticed, for example, fresh mouse droppings, gnawing marks, smears; you must take immediate action to control the problem. You can treat an infestation of mice yourself, but don't leave mouse bait down for extended periods – remove as soon as the infestation has been controlled.

Does the Council provide Treatment for mice? Yes

Pest Control Guidance Document - Rats

Months of Activity: All year round

Description

Rats are a hazard to public health. They can transmit a number of diseases, such as Weil's disease and murine typhus, and other organisms such as Salmonella bacteria, viruses and parasites such as worms and fleas.



In an urban environment rats can readily find food from a variety of sources such as refuse from commercial kitchens and restaurants, in addition to food waste obtained from scavenging in domestic refuse or in drains and sewers.

Rats will burrow, especially into soil, compost heaps, under coverings such as paved areas and under sheds. Gas and water pipes are also at risk and rat burrowing can undermine building foundations. They can be frequently found living inside buildings in the cavity between walls and in roof spaces, or beneath piles of rubbish, near water, or in drains and sewers. Due to their agility and ability to squeeze through small openings it is sometimes difficult to keep rats out of buildings without some form of rodent proofing being carried out.

Rats continually gnaw they have very hard front (incisor) teeth which can penetrate materials as hard as concrete, lead and aluminium. This can result in expensive damage and even fires when electric cables are damaged. Rats can breed quickly. A healthy female can produce five litters a year, each of 8-10 young with offspring attaining sexual maturity in 8-12 weeks. At any time as many as 30% of females in a population may be pregnant.

It is quite easy for infestations to build up without ever noticing a rat - their nocturnal habit tends to keep them away from the human contact. If a rat is seen during the day, it is usually an indicator of a sizeable infestation. Signs of infestation are droppings; gnaw marks, runs and 'smear marks' produced by the continual rubbing of their fur against surfaces.

How To Prevent Infestations

- Ensure that all defective drainage to your home is promptly repaired, such as broken drainpipes, and drainage chamber covers
- Empty bins regularly, & ensure spillages/refuse does not accumulate in the yard or garden
- Repair structural defects in the house to prevent rats gaining access to your home
- Place food intended for garden birds on a bird table or feeder, do not place food scraps directly on the ground

If signs of infestation are noticed, for example fresh rat droppings, gnawing marks and smears, take immediate action to control the problem and contact the Council's Pest Control Service for treatment.

Does the Council provide treatment for Rats? Yes

Pest Control Guidance Document - Wasps

Description

Wasps (*Vespula vulgaris*) are beneficial garden insects, collecting insects and larvae etc. to feed to developing wasp larvae in the nest during the summer months. Worker wasps will feed on a variety of foods including fruits such as apples, pears and plums. They collect wood to construct nests and may therefore damage the wooden fences and garden furniture. By the end of the summer, the queen wasp stops laying eggs and the workers no longer need to collect food for the young in the nest. They become free to search for sweet things such as cakes or sweets and therefore can become a nuisance. It is the ability of wasps to cause painful stings that concerns people most. People's reactions to wasp stings can vary considerably from intense pain and swelling round the area of the sting, to a severe allergic reaction (known as anaphylactic shock) which can be life threatening.



Life cycle

The queen wasp lays eggs in the nest and hatch into larvae within a few days. 4-6 weeks after the eggs are laid the first generation of workers emerge. These are female wasps and are smaller than the queens and take over responsibility for maintaining the nest and finding food, in particular high protein foodstuffs for the larvae such as flies, caterpillars, or spiders. The queen then devotes all her time to laying eggs and by the end of the summer the nest may contain 20,000 or more wasps. In the autumn the new queens and males produced from the nest mate and the fertilised queens search for hibernation sites. With the onset of winter weather the nests die out and are never reused.

Home treatment

Treating wasps nest can be very dangerous. For this reason professional treatment is always advised. If you do try to treat wasp nests yourself wear 'bee keeper' type protective clothing to prevent being stung.

Nests can be found by looking for signs of wasp activity on fine days. You can find the position of the nest by looking for foraging wasps flying either towards or away from a nest. Nests should only be treated with insecticides when activity around the nest is quiet, ideally in the late evening before dusk. You can obtain puffer packs from garden centres and DIY stores. You should apply insecticide powder around and into the entrance of the nest. Workers returning to the nest become contaminated and carry the insecticide into the nest. Control is usually achieved within a few hours.

Does the Council provide treatment treat for Wasps? Yes