

Why are carpet and fur beetles a pest?

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.

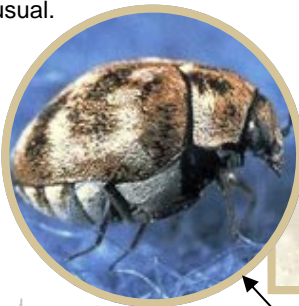
Carpet beetles are small, round and about the size of a ladybird (0.15cm to 0.4cm in length). They are dark brown or black with mottled patches of white or yellow. Fur beetles are the same size but have a single white spot on each wing.



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 larvae that causes damage to natural fibres, feeding until they are ready to turn in to a carpet or fur beetle.

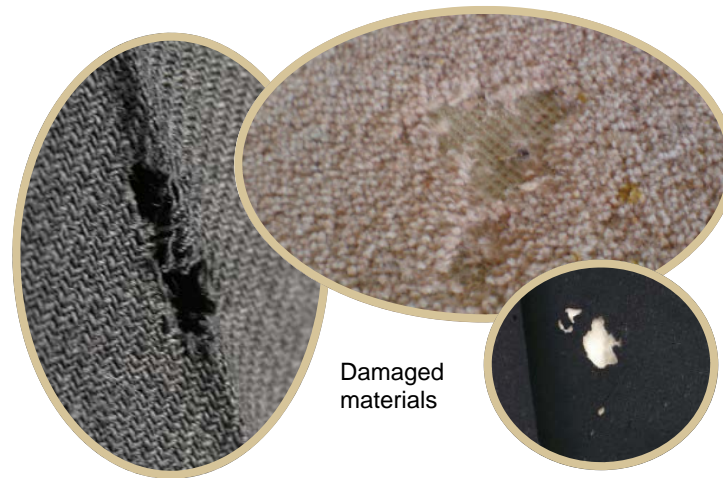
Sometimes when there are large numbers of beetles the hairs on the larvae may cause skin irritations for some people. However this is very unusual.



Adult carpet beetles

Adult fur beetle

Larvae (woolly bear)



Damaged materials

Signs of carpet and fur beetles

The following are signs that you may have a carpet beetle infestation:

- * Sightings—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
- * Bird nests—if you have bird nests in your loft this may be where the beetles are coming from
- * Damaged carpets and clothes—even textile products with a small % of natural fibre can get damaged. Check for damage on carpets around permanent furniture

How to prevent an infestation

By following these tips you may be able to prevent an infestation:

- * Vacuum regularly (especially in areas under storage heaters or at the skirting junction)
- * Remove old / unoccupied birds' nests from eaves and loft spaces
- * Remove dead birds or rodents when found in chimneys, under floors or in loft spaces
- * Avoid storing goods with a natural fibre content (like old carpets and clothing) in roof spaces as they are potential food sources
- * Maintain good hygiene



Control Measures

How to treat an infestation

The best way to treat an infestation of carpet or fur beetles is to use a suitable insecticide. You can buy this from your local DIY or garden centre.

Before using insecticide:

- * Remove and dispose of old or unused bird nests.
- * Vacuum these areas thoroughly using a nozzle head paying particular attention to cracks and crevices

Using insecticide:

- * Always refer to the product instructions BEFORE USE and follow these at all times
- * Spray the same areas with insecticide
- * Treat all other affected areas concentrating on the edges of the room and around items of heavy furniture.
- * Spray any exposed floorboards and any cracks and crevices

After using insecticide:

- * Do not vacuum for 10 days or more if possible. This will allow the insecticide to continue working on any hatching eggs or remaining larvae and adults

Private contractors

If you decide you would like to hire a professional pest controller you should always obtain a minimum of three quotes. This will allow you to compare service and price. You should also ensure the price is to eradicate (i.e. a fixed charge).

They should be a member of the British Pest Control Association (call 01332 294 288 or visit www.bpca.org.uk) or the National Pest Technician Association (call 01949 81133 or visit www.npta.org.uk).

Leeds City Council Service

The council offers competitive rates for the treatment and control of carpet and fur beetle in both domestic and commercial properties.

For further information or to book a treatment by a qualified and experienced pest control officer please call **0113 2224406**.

Commercial premises can arrange for a free survey and quotation.



Carpet and Fur Beetles

Pest information leaflet



Contact us

If you have any questions about the information in this leaflet or would like professional advice please contact
Leeds City Council Corporate Call Centre
0113 2224406
or email
pests@leeds.gov.uk

Further information and copies of this leaflet can be found on the council's website
www.leeds.gov.uk/pestcontrol

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