

HOME GROUNDS FACT SHEET



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Nassau County



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Black Carpet Beetle
(—)



Carpet Beetle
(—)



Larva
(—)



Varied Carpet Beetle
(—)



Furniture Carpet Beetle
(—) actual size

Carpet Beetles

Carpet beetles are “guests” you don’t want coming to dinner. They damage home furnishings and clothing containing natural fibers such as wool, hair, fur, hide and feathers. They may infest peppers, cereals, cake mixes and stored grains. Blankets, sweaters, comforters, rugs, tapestries, carpets, stuffed animals, draperies, pillows, hair in mattresses and brushes, dried flower arrangements and upholstery frequently harbor these pests.

The larvae (immatures) cause the feeding damage. They may crawl from room to room, becoming widely distributed. They may live behind baseboards, molding, in cracks, corners, behind radiators, in heating system air-ducts, in clothes, dresser drawers, etc.

The adult beetles are sometimes found on window sills on the sunny side of the house. They fly readily and during warm spring days, feed on flower pollen outdoors. Adults are known to infest wild buckwheat, crepe myrtle and spirea flowers. Adults may fly into a house from these sources.

In Nassau County there are four different species of carpet beetles: black carpet beetle, common carpet beetle, varied carpet beetle and furniture carpet beetle.

Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Considerations

IPM is a common sense approach to pest control and plant care. It employs a number of measures to prevent, control or reduce problems. Always use the least toxic methods first.

A good mechanical control, in many instances, is to vacuum the insects and then throw the bag away. Regarding household pests, in addition to regular house-cleaning, the best preventive method is to monitor the home, i.e. note any cracks in foundations, air spaces between windows and frames, poorly-fitting doors, moisture from leaks, etc., and correct such examples/situations.

Management

Once a hole is found in a fabric, the damage is done. That’s why it is important to apply preventive measures. These measures include using a strong suction vacuum cleaner with necessary attachments to thoroughly clean upholstered furniture, carpets and carpet pads, especially under and on top at the carpet edges. Remove lint that accumulates in attics, furnace vents, floor cracks, behind baseboards, etc. Dispose of vacuum bag. Eliminate untreated animal skins and worthless, neglected insect collections. Discard old woolen rugs, clothing, etc.

Have clothing dry cleaned regularly. Dry cleaners often provide moth-proofing as a service. Once cleaned, susceptible clothing should be protected in hard plastic storage containers. The insects can chew through plastic bags.

Woolens should be stored clean. Most cedar closets and chests, without protective chemicals, are not effective against carpet beetles. Placing furs in cold storage is a worthwhile practice.

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If the infestation appears to be heavy and in hard-to-treat places, the services of a pest control operator may be necessary. Chemical control measures include treating cracks and crevices in which beetles are likely to crawl and using a crack and crevice type applicator according to label directions.

Carefully treat cracks along edges of wall-to-wall carpeting, baseboards and moldings. If you have expensive broadloom or Oriental rugs, it may be wise to get a pest control operator. Using proper materials, caulk or seal all unnecessary cracks and crevices.

Where furniture is infested, it can be exposed to freezing mid-winter conditions for at least 72 hours. Protect it from inclement weather. At other times you have to use a professional pest control company that does fumigation work.

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