

# 15.9 CARPET BEETLE

**Scientific Name:** a) *Attagenus piceus* (Oliver)  
b) *Anthrenus scrophulariae* (Linnaeus)  
**Family:** Dermestidae  
**Order:** Coleoptera

**Status:** Potential pest.

**Distribution:** Fairly distributed in houses where carpets are used.

**Food:** Woollen material of all kinds, cotton goods, leather, bristles, feather, hair, silk, dried meat or milk, insect specimens, grains, flour and many other animal and plant products.

## DESCRIPTION OF STAGES

**Adult:** Adult is uniformly dull black and elliptical in outline, with brownish legs and antennae. It measure about 1/8 to 5/32 inch in length. Body is concealed by a dense covering of small scales.

**Egg:** Eggs are mostly soft, white and laid on food in dark places, clothing, the angles of upholstered furniture and other dust accumulated places. Incubation period is 8 to 15 days.

**Larva:** Larvae are carrot-shaped, elongated, and golden to chocolate brown with a tuft of long hair at the end of the body.

**Pupa:** Pupation period is 1 to 2 weeks.

## LIFE HISTORY

A female lays 50 eggs, which are deposited on lint, baseboard and other similar places. Eggs hatch in one week. Development occurs under a wide range of temperature and humid conditions. The larval period varies in length depending on environment and nutrition, and may take 9 months to 3

years. The larvae pass through 5-10 moultings and can survive starvation conditions. Full grown larvae are wanderers and thus pupation may occur almost anywhere in a house. The pupal stage lasts for 1 to 2 weeks.

## DAMAGE

The larvae of carpet beetle attack keratin-containing materials such as wool, fur, hair, feathers and occasionally skins. The black carpet beetle is the most persistent and devastating species which damage by making many irregular holes in woollens.

## NON-CHEMICAL CONTROL

1. Vacuum cleaning of carpets is helpful for the control of this pest.
2. Dry out the carpets affected by the pest during summer in the bright sunshine.

## CHEMICAL CONTROL

1. Pyrethroids (such as permethrin and cypermethrin) in 0.1 to 0.5% concentrations as dust, mats/coils and aerosol sprays are effective for the control of this household pest.
2. Malathion application in very low concentration is also effective