

Bed Bugs



Cimex lectularius Linnaeus
(Cimicidae: Hemiptera)

- Status:** Potential household pest in some areas.
- Distribution:** Fairly distributed in houses, poultry sheds, barns, slums, railway saloon beds, wooden cots, hospital beds and other damp inhabitations in cities.
- Food:** Being ectoparasite sucks blood of human beings, mammals and poultry. It is most repulsive nocturnal pest which is mainly found in dirty old houses and once established it is very difficult to eradicate.

DESCRIPTION OF STAGES

- Adult:** The adult is small, reddish brown in colour, ovate in shape, flattened, wingless and about 13 mm long and 3 mm broad with a very distinct odour. Before sucking blood it is flat and active but after meal becomes oval and sluggish.
- Egg:** Female lays creamy white elongate eggs in hiding places such as cracks of furniture, behind base boards and under loose edges of wallpaper. Eggs are 1 mm long.
- Nymph:** There are 5 nymphal stages, each requiring at least one full blood meal.

LIFE HISTORY

Female lays 75-500 eggs @ 3-4 eggs/ day in hiding places in 2-3 months. The eggs hatch in about 6-17 days under favourable conditions. Small nymphs pass 5 moultings during 6-8 weeks. Life cycle from egg to adult requires about 15-50 weeks but this period may be prolonged due to unfavourable conditions. Breeding occurs throughout the year depending on the favourable warm climate and food supply. In winter its egg laying is suspended. Adult lives for about 6 months and can withstand at least a year of starvation. Nymphs can live for 6-8 weeks or more without food. There may be 3-4 generations in a year.

DAMAGE

The pest causes damage at night when it becomes active for blood meal. Intense itching

inflammation is felt after its bite. The lesions produced in poultry may be as irritating as it forces the birds to leave their nests.

CHEMICAL CONTROL

1. The application of kerosene oil with the help of medical syringe in the crevices of the infesting cots can be safely used for the control of this pest.
2. Low concentration of dichlorvos or malathion i.e. @ 1 % for the control of this pest in the cracks and crevices of the cots is quite helpful.
3. Pyrethroids (such as permethrin and cypermethrin) in 0.1 to 0.5% concentrations as dust, mats/coils and aerosol sprays are also effective for the control of this household pest.