

# Carpet Beetles

## Identification

Adult carpet beetles are round or oval like ladybugs, but smaller. They have grayish, yellowish, brown, or black spotted backs and gray, yellow, or white undersides. Adult carpet beetles do not damage fabric; they feed on pollen and often enter the home on cut flowers.

Carpet beetle larvae are about 1/4" long and covered in stiff hairs.

## Signs of Infestation

Adult carpet beetles feed on pollen, but larvae may damage a wide variety of fabrics, including woolens, furs, silks feathers, stuffed animals, bristles, horn, and carpets. They may also feed on stored dry foods, such as grains and spices. Carpet beetle larvae cannot feed on synthetic fibers.

Carpet beetle infestations may also leave fecal pellets about the size of a grain of salt or cast skins as larvae molt.

Stored items should be inspected regularly for carpet beetle infestation.



## Prevention

To prevent carpet beetle infestations, regularly vacuum rugs and furniture, especially in low-traffic areas such as baseboards and under furniture. Accumulations of lint, animal hair, dead insects, and other debris provides food for carpet beetles. They may also be attracted by food and perspiration stains on stored clothing should be placed in sealed containers or with moth crystals or resin strips.

To prevent adult carpet beetles from entering your home, inspect cut flowers before bringing them indoors. Keep windows and doors screened or closed to prevent beetles flying in.



## Control

Before attempting to control a carpet beetle infestation, it is important to first conduct a thorough inspection, including stored clothing and carpets, low-traffic areas of carpets and furniture, and stored foods.

Infested fabrics such as rugs, carpets, and clothing should be thoroughly vacuumed, brushed, washed, or dry cleaned to remove carpet beetles and their larvae. Items that are badly infested should be discarded.

Infested food items should be discarded outside the home. Remove all remaining items from the infested cupboard and wipe the shelving with a damp sponge.

You may choose to use an aerosol insect spray that is labeled for food pests to treat cracks and crevices inside the cupboard. If you use an insecticide, wait until the spray is completely dry and the odor is gone before returning items to the cupboard.

Aerosol insecticides labeled for carpet beetle control may also be used to treat hard to clean places such as baseboards and under furniture. Never spray near electric

motors, gas pilot flames, or other places where sprays may cause a fire hazard. Always follow label directions when using insecticides.

Insecticide sprays are not recommended for pillows or upholstered furniture; they cannot reach beetles or larvae inside the stuffing. These items can be treated by a pest control operator using fumigation techniques.

Smaller items may also be frozen for two weeks to kill adult carpet beetles and their larvae.

## How We Can Help

The District does not provide chemical control for carpet beetles or other household pests. However, the District laboratory may be able to identify carpet beetle samples brought to the District office in a sealed bag or vial.

## San Mateo County Mosquito and Vector Control District

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