

INSECT DAMAGE

Although several different types of insects can damage wool rugs almost all of the damage that is seen is the result of carpet beetles and clothes moths. Clothes moths are small, only about 1/4" in length as opposed to the more common food infesting moths which are double that size. Their flight pattern is somewhat distinctive as they flutter about erratically usually only near the infested area and they are not attracted to lights. The females lay an average of 40-50 eggs in darker, undisturbed areas and the eggs typically hatch in 1-2 weeks. The larvae emerge and use the wool as a food source. The larval stage may last from one month up to 2 1/2 years.

Carpet beetles, depending on the species, range in size from 1/10" to 3/16" and their bodies somewhat resemble lady bugs in shape. Adult beetles are pollen and nectar feeders so they often fly into homes from nearby flowers or piggyback on fresh cut flowers. As with clothes moths it is the larvae that feed on wool and the larval stage may last up to 21 months.

Since both the carpet beetle and clothes moth prefer dark undisturbed areas it is important to regularly check your rugs for any signs of damage. Pay particular attention to the underside edges as well as both back and front areas that are under heavy furniture. Look for any areas of missing wool. Moth larvae will leave behind silken tubes or mats often the color of the wool and beetles leave behind shed skins and fecal pellets the size of a grain of salt which should aid in identification. If you think you have damage contact your local ARCS cleaner. They have the necessary training and experience to safely and effectively treat your rugs. They may also recommend you call a licensed pest control provider.

Prevention is the best course of action. Periodic vacuuming of the back of your rug, especially areas under heavy furniture, rotating larger rugs, and keeping areas along baseboards and anywhere else hair and debris may accumulate clean is helpful. Having rugs professionally cleaned on a regular basis is important. Rugs with food and urine stains are more subject to damage.

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