

Pest Fact sheet No 7

Biscuit beetle

Name Biscuit beetle, bread beetle, drugstore beetle [US]

Latin name *Stegobium paniceum*

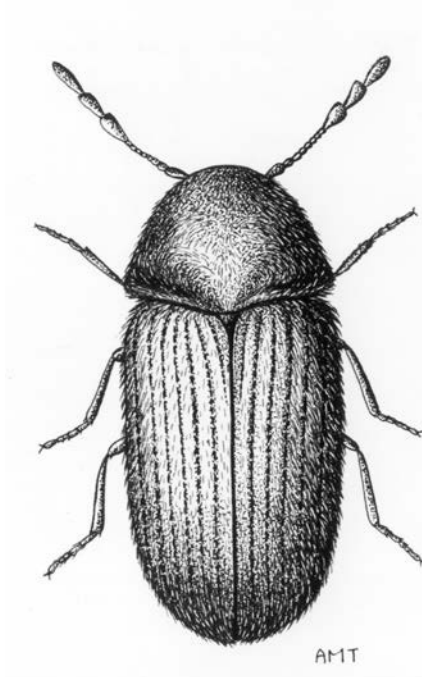
Size Adult 2-3mm long



Larvae are 2-3mm long but are not normally seen

Identification features

Adult



Reddish-brown oval beetle with hairs and parallel lines on the wing cases. Head not visible from above. Antennae with three shaped segments at the ends.

Larva

Larvae are creamy-white and C-shaped but are rarely seen as they live in tunnels in the food.



Life cycle

The adults fly very well in warm conditions and may be attracted to lights. They lay eggs in hard, starchy food, such as dried plant material, biscuits and papier mache. The tiny larvae tunnel into the food where they feed and grow. The length of the life cycle depends upon the temperature and the nutrition of the food, but can be as short as 3 months at 25°C. When the adults emerge, they leave round exit holes with piles of gritty frass [excreta].

Signs of Infestation

Emergence holes in infested objects.



What will they eat?

They are important pests of the food industry. In herbaria *Stegobium* will seriously damage dried plants and fungi. They have also been found infesting freeze-dried natural history specimens. *Stegobium* will damage books when there are high levels of starch and animal glue. They will not eat or survive on wood.

Written by David Pinniger

Emergence holes
in seed heads and
frass on sheet



Emergence holes in book
bindings



**Is the infestation
active?**

Look for frass below
emergence holes and
fresh adult beetles on
windowsills



Similar species

Furniture beetle *Anobium punctatum* [Fact sheet No 2]
Darker, less hairy and with a humped thorax.

Cigarette beetle *Lasioderma serricorne*. Smaller and
shiny

Written by David Pinniger