

# Pest Fact sheet No 11

## Two-spot carpet beetle and Vodka beetle

**Name** Two spot carpet beetle or Fur beetle

**Latin name** *Attagenus pello*

**Size** Adult 5mm-6 mm long

Larvae 0.5 mm – 10 mm long



**Vodka beetle** [also known as **Brown carpet beetle**]

*Attagenus smirnovi*

Adult 4mm-6 mm long

Larvae 0.5 mm – 10 mm long



### Identification features

#### Adult Two spot carpet beetles

Oval black beetles with a white spot on each wing case.  
Males smaller than females.  
Antennae of male with a long club.



#### Vodka beetles

Oval brown beetles with a black thorax and head.  
Wing cases covered with short hairs.  
Males smaller than females.  
Antennae of male with a long club.



Written by David Pinniger

**Larva** The larvae of these two species are almost impossible to tell apart.

Both species are long with bands of darker hairs. The body is often curved and there is usually a brush of hairs at the back end.



### **Distribution and origin**

**Adult two-spot beetles** are indigenous and are found in many domestic and historic houses throughout the UK.

**Vodka beetles** were introduced into the UK in 1970's and have now become established in many museums and houses in the London area. Currently [2017], Cambridge and Birmingham are the only other cities known with established infestations. They are a common household pest in parts of Northern Europe.

### **Life cycle**

The adults fly in warm weather and may often be found on window sills. Females lay batches of eggs secreted in cracks and crevices. When the larvae first hatch they are long and narrow and extremely small, less than 0.5 mm. When they are larger, they will wander around and may attack more than one object.

This species does not live outdoors in the UK. Adults fly when it is warm and are often attracted to lights. Females lay batches of eggs secreted in cracks and crevices. When the larvae first hatch they are long and narrow and extremely small, less than 0.5 mm. When they are larger, they will wander around and may attack more than one object.

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**Two-spot beetle larvae** generally feed on dead insects and fur and feathers. They will attack natural history specimens and may also eat wool and fur textiles. They take 1 or 2 years to complete their growth and each new cycle starts after they pupate and change into adults in the Spring.

**Vodka beetle larvae** generally feed on organic detritus containing both animal protein and starch. They will live in cereals and flour and they may occasionally attack botany and zoology specimens and textiles. They normally take 1 year to complete their life cycle, but if it is hot, there may be more than one generation a year

**Signs of damage**



The larvae of both species moult regularly and shed striped skins.



These shed skins are often found with the larvae on sticky traps



Damage to wool blanket with a cast larval skin.

**Finding the source**

**Two-spot carpet beetle adults and larvae** will often be found in top floor rooms and attics of historic houses, feeding on dead insects such as cluster flies. They may also be found in living in bird nests in blocked chimneys.

**Vodka beetle larvae** are often found in large numbers in clumps of organic dirt and fluff in dead spaces. They can be very difficult to eradicate once they get established

**Similar species**

***Attagenus unicolor*, the black carpet beetle**, is found in some other countries, including the USA. This is similar in shape to *A pellio*, but has no spots and is all black. So far, no infestations of this species have been found in the UK.