Red Flour Beetles Identification and Biology

By DoMyOwn staff

The Confused Flour Beetle and Red Flour Beetle adults are almost exactly similar in appearance, and behavior. However, the Red Flour Beetle is more common in the Southern states, while the Confused Flour Beetle is more common in the North.

Red Flour Beetle Identification

- **Adults** are small (about 3/16" in length), with reddish-brown flattened bodies. Antennae end abruptly in a 3-segmented club.
- **Eggs** are microscopic in size and white or without color.
- **Larvae** are skinny, ¼" in length, and yellow to cream in color. They have six legs and two-forked projections at the last rear body segment.
- **Pupae** are white to light brown.

Signs of Red Flour Beetle Infestation

Infested flour may be discernable by its moldy flavor and pungent odor. Adult flour beetles may be on the surface of infested foods, deep inside the food material, or scurrying away when disturbed.

Feeding Preferences

Red Flour Beetles (sometimes called "bran beetles") are found mainly in milled grain products like **cereals and flour**. Additional preferences include **barley, breakfast cereals, corn, cornmeal, crackers, flour, millet, oats, rice, rye, wheat, nutmeats, dried fruits, powdered milk, spices, and rat baits**. Adult and larvae of Red Flour Beetles feed on grain dust and broken kernels, but not on whole undamaged kernels.

Damage

Flour Beetles (Confused and Red) are the greatest damage-causing pest of flour mills in the United States. Red Flour Beetles DO NOT bite or sting, spread disease, or damage house or furniture.

Prevention and Control of Red Flour Beetles

- The best method to avoid stored-product pests is careful sanitation. Pantry shelves should be kept free of crumbs and stickiness.
- If you do locate an infested package, get rid of it immediately.
- When purchasing foods, check the packaging date to ensure freshness.
- Do not purchase food packages that look open or damaged.
- Utilize several pantry pest traps in and around the infested area.

Products

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