



How To Get Rid of Clothes Moths

By DoMyOwn staff

What are Clothes moths?

Clothes moths are one of the three main fabric pests, the other two being hide beetles and carpet beetles. All fabric pests have the rare ability to digest keratin, the main protein constituent of hair, skin and fingernails of humans. This means that sweaters, coats, upholstered furniture, and furs are perfect feeding ground for clothes moths because of the presence of human keratin left behind by hair oils or the salt in urine, tomato juice, or sweat stains. Synthetic fabrics or natural fabrics which are not keratin-based (such as silk) will rarely suffer damage from clothes moths.

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3 Types of Clothes Moths

There are three types of clothes moths common in the United States, with webbing and casemaking clothes moths being far more prevalent than tapestry clothes moths. All clothes moths have a complete metamorphosis (same life stages as a butterfly) with an egg, larva, pupa, and adult stage. All of the adults have narrow wings that fold over the body at rest and create about a ½" wingspan. Both sexes often run or jump rather than fly, but if they do fly, they stay in dark areas.

1. Webbing Clothes Moths (*Tineola bisselliella*) are the most common clothes moth. Webbing clothes moths pose a serious threat to museum objects, historical churches, drapery shops, and rug stores. The adult is about 7-8mm in length, has a shiny head and wings, a golden buff color, and a tuft of reddish hair on the head.
2. Casemaking Clothes Moths (*Tinea pellionella*) are less common and, therefore, cause less damage than webbing clothes moths. Casemaking clothes moths are also more abundant in the southern United States than in the north. The name "casemaking" comes from the larva's spinning a protective silk case while it feeds, incorporating fibers on which it is feeding. This often makes the larva difficult to see since they may appear to be the same color as the fibers. The larva carries this case with it as it feeds, even expanding the case as it grows. The case is left behind if the larva dies, but the moth stay in the case to pupate. Adults are a dusty brown color with three dark spots on the forewings.
3. Tapestry Clothes Moths (*Hofmannophila pseudospretella*) are rare in the United States. They have been found in old tapestries and rugs, and in the furs and feathers of stuffed animals and birds. Adults have a white head and wings that are black at the base and extreme tips. Tapestry clothes moths are larger than the webbing or casemaking moths.

Clothes Moth Control

Clothes moth larvae need the Vitamin B found in soilage to survive. That is why clean garments are far less likely to suffer clothes moth damage. *The best prevention for clothes moth damage is vacuuming the home regularly and cleaning woolen garments before storing them in airtight containers.*

- All fabric pests need higher humidity to survive, so air conditioning and heating help to **lower humidity** to deter infestations.
- **Dry cleaning** is a very effective method of clothes moth control because it kills all stages of fabric pests.
- **Beat and brush woolens and like materials** once or twice a month to dislodge or crush eggs and young larvae.
- **Inspect** areas where larvae may feed, such as along edges of carpeting, under furniture, and in folds of stored clothing.
- [ProPest Clothes Moths Traps](#) come with a virtually odorless pheromone pack to attract moths. A safe and easy way to monitor and reduce a population.
- You can **spray a broad-spectrum liquid insecticide** such as [Suspend SC](#) around the perimeter of rooms and closets and in cracks and crevices.
- A dust such as [Tempo Dust](#) can be applied to heavily infested areas which cannot be reached with a liquid spray. Dusts should not be used directly on clothing or areas which will come in direct contact with skin.

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