

Pest Fact sheet No 12

Guernsey carpet beetle

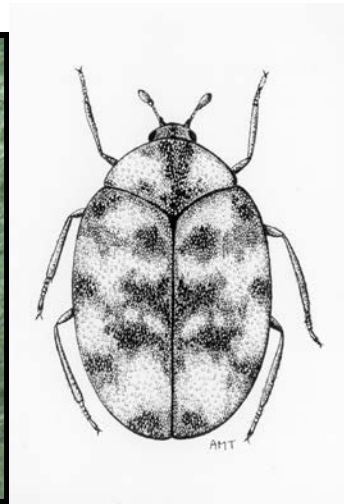
Name Guernsey carpet beetle

Latin name *Anthrenus sarnicus*

Size  Adult 2 mm - 3 mm long
 Larvae 0.5 mm – 5 mm long

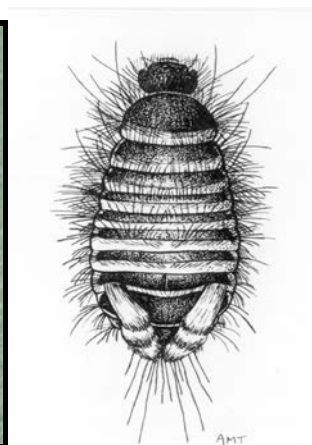
Identification features

Adult



Small round beetles covered with grey and gold scales. Some scales can be lost showing the black underneath. Prominent head with clubbed antennae.

Larva



Short and fat with bands of orange brown hairs. They are extremely difficult to distinguish from the closely related varied carpet beetle *Anthrenus verbasci*. Often called 'woolly bears'

Life cycle

Adult beetles fly when it is warm and may frequently be found on window sills. They were introduced into London in the 1960's and have spread around the UK since then.

Females lay batches of eggs secreted in cracks and crevices. When the larvae first hatch they are extremely small, less than 0.5 mm, and they can gain entry to cupboards and drawers through very small cracks. When they are larger, they will wander around and may attack more than one object.

The larvae usually take 1 year to complete their growth and a new cycle starts after they pupate and change into adults in the Spring. If it is hot, then there may be another generation later in the year.

Signs of damage



As the larvae grow, they leave empty hairy cast skins, or husks, which may be the first signs of beetle attack.

Cast skins and frass



They produce pellets of excreta, called frass, which may be found under or near infested objects

Materials damaged

The larvae are voracious feeders and will rapidly make neat holes in woollen textiles, animal specimens, fur and feathers.



They will also graze on animal glue in book bindings and picture frames. Clean cotton materials are not normally attacked, although larvae may bore through this on their way out of a feather cushion.

Dead larvae and cast skins in a drawer of damaged insects after freezing



Finding the source

Guernsey carpet beetle larvae attack natural history specimens, carpets, upholstery, clothing and other textiles. The larvae wander around but are often in dark and hidden places in crevices and folds where dirt accumulates. They will feed on dead insects, especially flies, and are also found in natural situations such as birds' nests, wasp nests and animal burrows.

Similar species

Varied carpet beetle *Anthrenus verbasci*
(See pest fact sheet No 1)

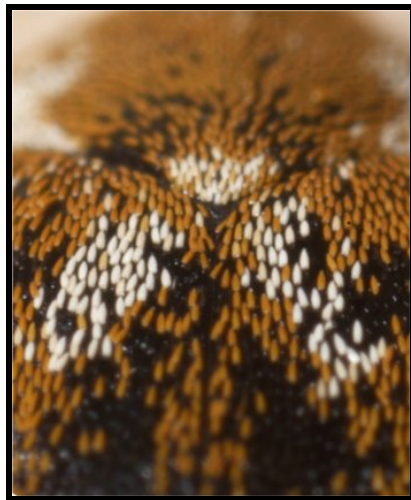
Carpet beetle *Anthrenus fuscus* (no common name)

How do you tell which species you have?

The larvae of all three species are very difficult to identify accurately.

Adult Guernsey carpet beetles often appear to be greyer in colour than varied carpet beetles, but the only sure way to tell the difference between them is the shape of the scales. This can only be seen under relatively high magnification.

Varied carpet beetle Guernsey carpet beetle



Anthrenus fuscus adults often appear to be very dark and the last segment of the antenna is very long.



Australian carpet beetle *Anthrenocerus australis* has been found in a few houses in London. This is also dark, but has patches of white hairs instead of scales.