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Drugstore Beetles

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The Drugstore beetle and the closely related Cigarette beetle are small reddish-brown beetles that infest grains, pet food, straw flowers, tea, old rodent bait, red pepper, flour, spices, leather, animal hair, tobacco and other dried plant material. Adults are 1/8- 1/10 inch long and cylindrical. Drug store beetles are unusual for grain pest because the adults can fly and often collect near lights and windows. They were often a pest of herbal medicines and pharmaceuticals thus the common name. Infested product often has small round "shot holes" in packaging and large amounts of dusty frass (insect waste) inside.



Drugstore beetle adult

Drugstore beetles are brought into the home on food items and often spread to other products before the infestation is discovered. The life cycle takes 3-4 months at room temperatures. Small C-shaped grubs can be found feeding inside the product. Adults can often be found a good distance from the source which makes finding the source of the infestation difficult. Holes and damage found in packaging are caused by the adults as they leave the product.

Control. Because this is a food pest the best control is cleanup and dispose of infested products. Check all potential products for activity. Un-infested dry goods should be stored in substantial glass or plastic containers with tight fitting lids to prevent spreading the infestation. Heating infested products to 140 ° F for 2-3 hours or freezing at 20 ° F or less for 48 hours will kill all life stages. You cannot control this pest with insecticides because you cannot spray the food source. Numbers should drop within 1-2 weeks of the clean-up. If beetle numbers remain high look for other sources of the problem within the home.

For more information: Contact your County Extension Agent:

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