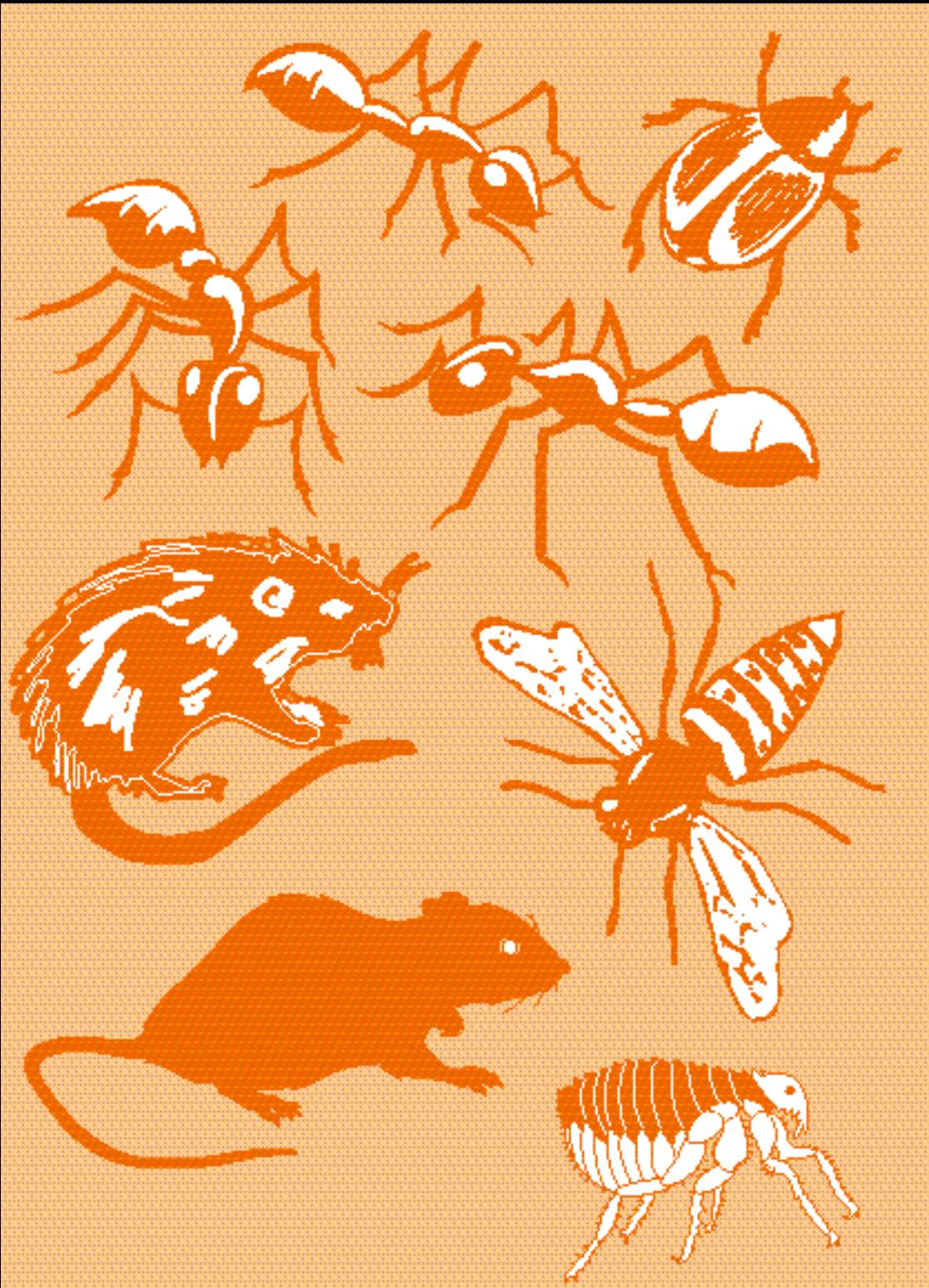
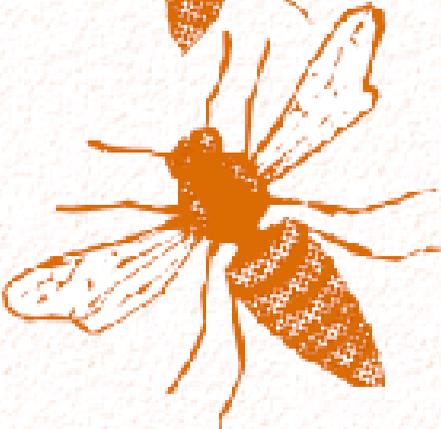


**A GUIDE  
TO PEST  
CONTROL**





# WASPS

Wasps are probably the most familiar and generally disliked of all British insects. Their bodies have black and yellow bands with a narrow waist in the middle of the body. They vary in size from the worker, which is 10-15mm in length, to the queen, which is 20mm long. They have two pairs of wings which lock together. Only the females have the needle-like sting which is hidden near the tip of the abdomen.

## Distribution

Several species of wasp exist in the UK but the most abundant is the Common Wasp and German Wasp. Both species nest underground or in the cavities of trees, walls and buildings.

## Significance

Wasps can be a nuisance but do not spread disease. Although they are generally disliked because of their sting, most species of wasp will only do this if they are aroused

or frightened. Wasps can cause serious damage to ripe fruit and are generally a nuisance when attracted to sweet smelling foods. Their benefits, however, are that in the spring and early summer wasp grubs feed on other insect pests.

## **Life Cycle**

The queen comes out of the nest in the autumn and after mating selects a suitable place to hibernate. Late in the following spring the surviving queens come out of hibernation to choose a nest site. The nest is usually either in the ground or in roof cavities. The nest is built up from wood pulp which is moulded into the outer shell of the nest and contains many internal chambers. The queen lays an egg in each of the chambers and these hatch into larvae which are fed on dead insects by the queen. When fully grown, the larvae pupate and sterile workers emerge from the pupae. These workers help to rear new larvae and the new queens. Towards the end of the summer the queen lays a number of eggs which produce male wasps and these mate with the new queens. As the weather becomes colder in the autumn, all the wasps die except the new queens which fly away to find hibernation sites. The old nests are not recolonized the following year.

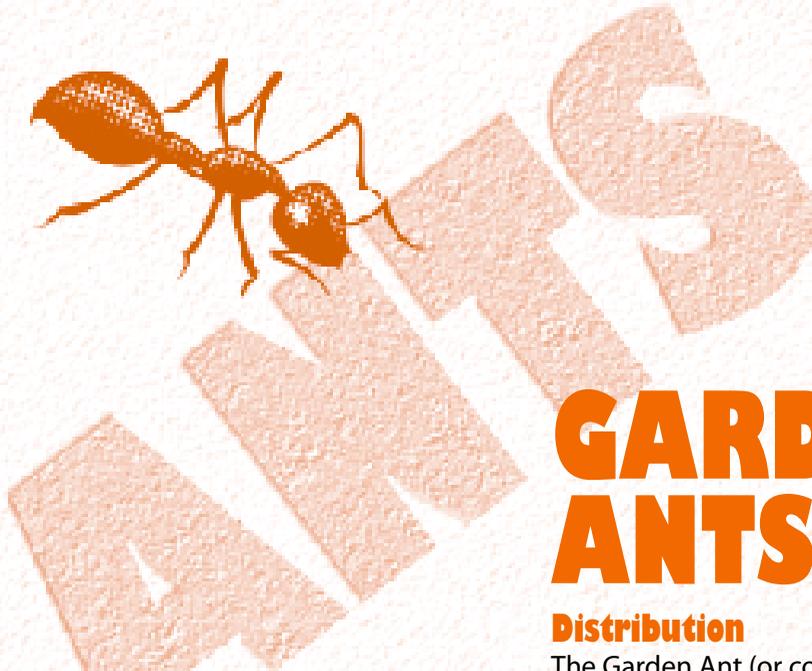
## **Control**

It is only necessary to treat wasp nests if they pose a particular danger to you or your family. If this danger does not exist, the nests should be left undisturbed.

If necessary you can treat wasp nests yourself with care, using a proprietary insecticide. However, if professional help is required our Pest Control Officers can treat the nest with insecticidal dust or spray. A single treatment will usually be enough to destroy all the wasps in a nest. As old nests are not recolonized, you do not need to remove treated nests.

## **Safety**

All pesticides are applied by our qualified and experienced staff to ensure the safety of the public and to minimise damage to the environment.



# GARDEN ANTS

## Distribution

The Garden Ant (or common black ant) is found throughout Britain and will nest in gardens under paving stones and around buildings, often going into premises to search for food.

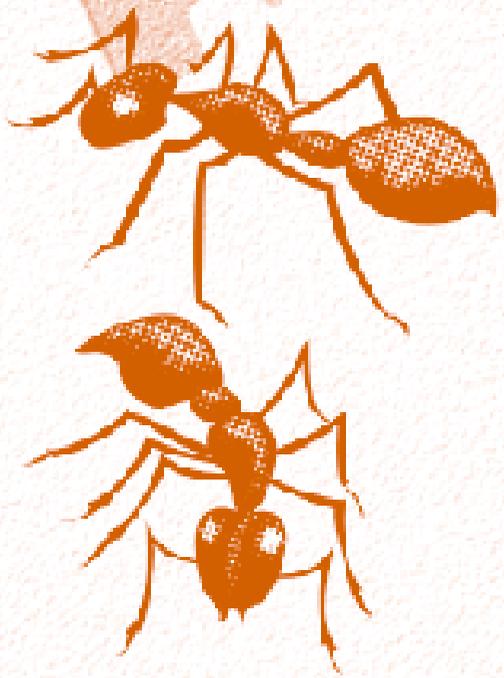
## Significance

The Garden Ant is a nuisance because of its foraging habit but it does not carry germs or spread disease. Garden Ants are attracted to sugary food. The presence of ants in food although unpleasant, does not in itself constitute a health risk.

## Life Cycle

The Garden Ants mate in flight when winged males and females swarm between mid July and mid August.

After mating the male dies and the female loses her wings and buries



herself in the soil over the winter. In late spring the female lays eggs which hatch into white larvae in 3-4 weeks. The larvae are fed by the queen and when fully grown pupate. The worker ants which emerge from the pupae feed the queen and any new larvae. The life cycle is complete in two months and in favourable conditions the nest may remain for several years.

## Control

There are several measures that you can take to control Garden Ants:

- ❖ Identify and destroy the nest using boiling water or an approved insecticidal dust or spray used around the nest and openings in buildings, e.g. doorsteps, wall vents and window sills.
- ❖ Ensure that sugary foods are kept in sealed containers and all food spillages are cleared up.

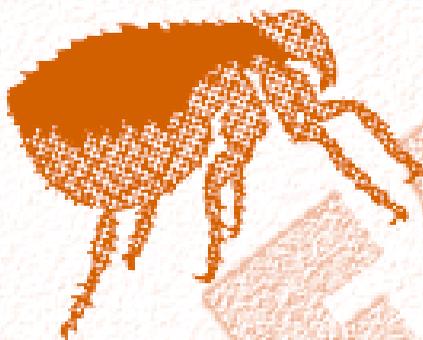
## Safety

Please remember to take all appropriate safety measures when using pesticides.

Always follow manufacturers instructions and ensure children and pets are kept away from treated areas.

Always store chemicals and pesticides in a high, locked cupboard.

Always wear gloves and clean hands after applying pesticides.



# FLEAS

## Description

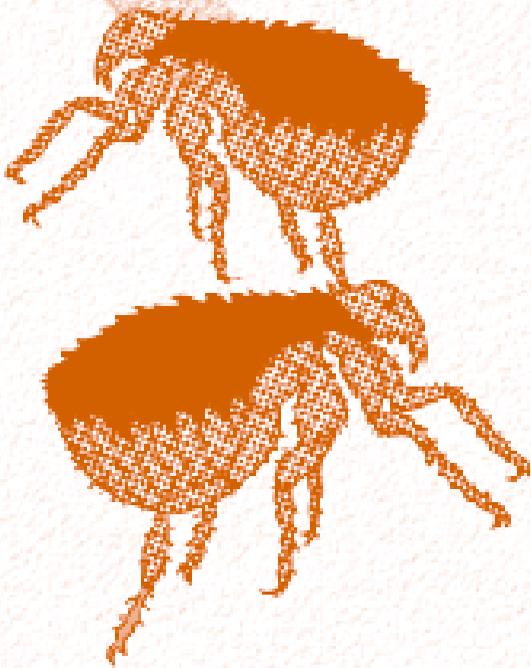
The adult flea is 2-7mm long and brownish in colour. Their bodies are compressed from side to side enabling them to move quickly through hairs and they have relatively large hind limbs which are used for jumping. The three most common species are:

- ❖ the cat flea,
- ❖ the dog flea, and
- ❖ the human flea.

## Distribution

All fleas live solely as parasites on warm blooded animals and although they have a preferred host, normally mammals, both the cat and dog flea can also be found on and feed from other animals and man.

As well as being found on the host, fleas can frequently be found in the hosts' bedding. Cat fleas are by far the most common, accounting for 75% of all flea infestations. The flea population reaches its peak in



September and is a particular problem in areas of high population density.

## Significance

Fleas are known as carriers of disease and can also be responsible for the transmission of parasitic worms such as the dog tape worm. In the UK, however, fleas are not generally responsible for the spread of infection but can inflict unpleasant bites on their host. Flea bites will be seen as a tiny dark red spot surrounded by a reddened area. The bite will remain irritating for one to two days and in some cases may lead to hypersensitivity.

## Life Cycle

Flea eggs are small, oval shaped and pearl white in colour and are laid indiscriminately in the fur or feathers of the host or in its bedding or resting materials. The eggs hatch in about one week into white thread-like larvae. The larvae thrive in dark, humid places such as carpets and animal bedding.

After two to three weeks when they are fully grown, the larvae spin a cocoon and pupate. The adult usually emerges within seven weeks but can remain as a pupa throughout the winter only emerging when triggered by the movement of a suitable host. The complete life cycle will normally last four weeks but may take longer at low temperatures

## Control

By taking simple measures you may be able to control a minor flea infestation yourself by:

- ❖ thoroughly cleaning all infested clothing and bedding.
- ❖ thoroughly cleaning the infested area by vacuuming carpet edges and soft furnishings and remove all accumulations which may act as a breeding site, and
- ❖ checking your pets for fleas and treat if necessary with a proprietary flea powder or flea collar.

If you need professional help, our Pest Control Officers will treat your premises with an insecticidal spray. You can help us by clearing furniture away from the rooms which will be treated and by vacuuming the carpet before we visit.

A single spray treatment of the carpets and soft furnishings will be made and all treated areas should be left undisturbed for eight to ten days.

## Safety

All pesticides are applied by our qualified and experienced staff to ensure the safety of the public and to minimise damage of the environment.



# MICE

## Description

The two types of mice in Britain which can become pests are:

- ❖ the house mouse, and
- the long-tailed field mouse.

The adult house mouse may weigh up to 50 grammes; usually has brown fur on its back and is grey underneath. Its ears are fairly large in relation to its body and its feet are small. The tail is the same length as the head and body but is much thinner than the tail of a young rat.

## Distribution

Mice are widely distributed throughout urban areas and in farm buildings.

The house mouse is a more common domestic pest which will nest beneath floor, in lofts and behind wall boarding. Mice are most active at night and will range over a very small area if food is plentiful. They are less dependant on water and will normally obtain

sufficient moisture from their food.

## **Significance**

Mice, like rats, are a major hazard to health. They are responsible for the spread of many diseases some of which can be fatal to man. They eat food which may be intended for human consumption and contaminate much more with their urine, droppings and fur. Food contaminated in this way must then be disposed of. Mice can also cause structural damage to property by gnawing through woodwork, wires, pipes and household items.

## **Life Cycle**

The life expectancy of mice is around one year during which time a female may breed up to six times. The average size of a litter is six. Breeding occurs throughout the year but especially in the Spring and Autumn.

## **Control**

You will need professional help in controlling colonies of mice.

They are particularly difficult to control because of the rate at which they breed and are able to colonise new areas.

By ensuring that your premises are in good repair and that no food is left around the house or garden you will prevent mice from being encouraged onto your property.

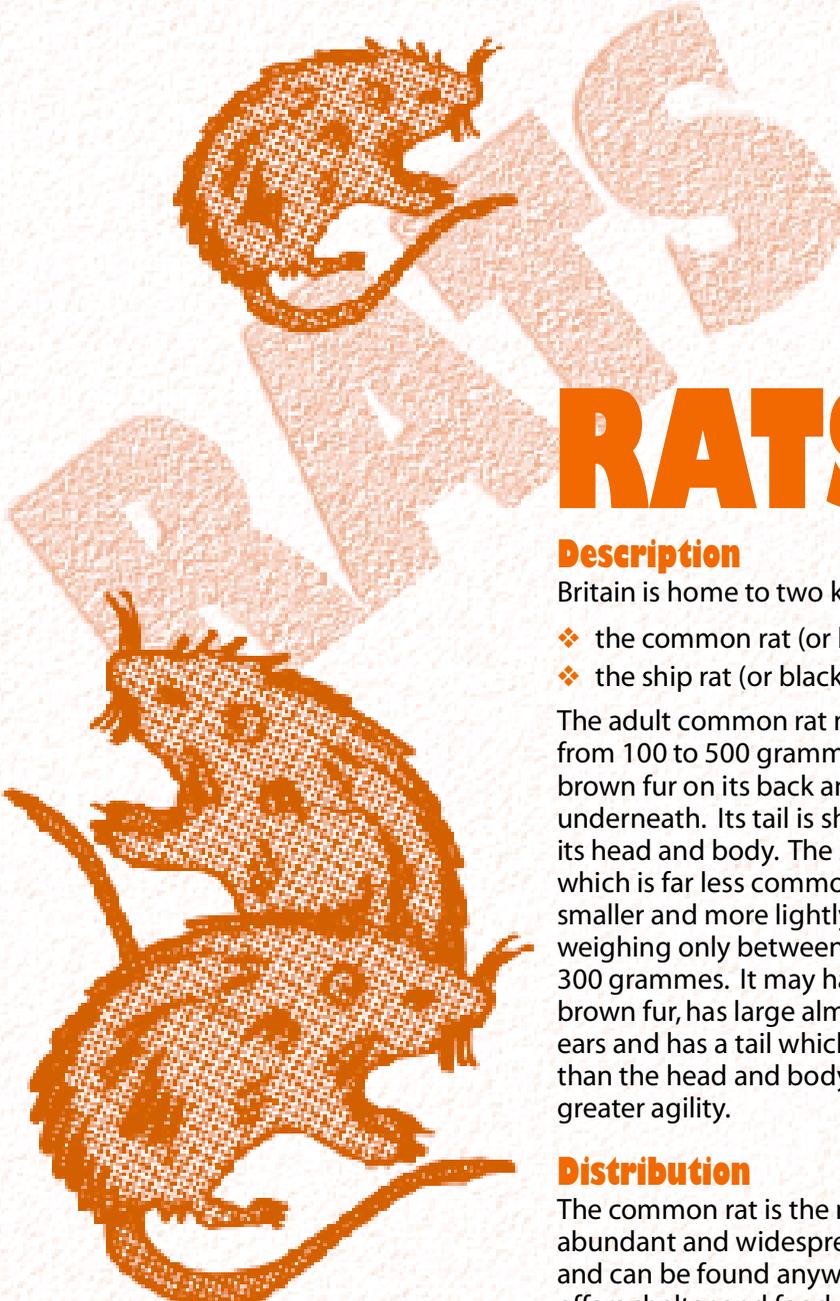
In the event of infestation, our Pest Control Officers will survey the

area to determine the size of the colony and the most appropriate control measures.

Poison baits will normally be laid where mice have been active. The bait should be left undisturbed until our officers return to assess the effectiveness of the treatment.

## **Safety**

All pesticides are applied by our qualified and experienced staff to ensure the safety of the public and to minimise damage to the environment.



# RATS

## Description

Britain is home to two kinds of rats:

- ❖ the common rat (or brown rat)
- ❖ the ship rat (or black rat)

The adult common rat may weigh from 100 to 500 grammes and has brown fur on its back and grey underneath. Its tail is shorter than its head and body. The ship rat, which is far less common, is smaller and more lightly built weighing only between 100 and 300 grammes. It may have black or brown fur, has large almost hairless ears and has a tail which is longer than the head and body, giving it greater agility.

## Distribution

The common rat is the most abundant and widespread species and can be found anywhere that offers shelter and food - including sewers. They are efficient burrowers and favour compost heaps and the ground underneath hedges and sheds where they dig

shallow burrows and form nests with dry grass and leaves. In houses they will nest in wall cavities and beneath floor boards. Ship rats will normally be found indoors, mainly in port areas, but they may be transported inland, with cargo. Being agile climbers and jumpers, ship rats will often nest in roof spaces and upper floors.

Both species of rat are active mainly at night but may be seen in search of food and water during the day.

## **Significance**

Rats are a major hazard to health. They spread many forms of disease some of which may be fatal to man such as Weils' Disease. They may eat food which is intended for human consumption and they often damage much more which has to be discarded. Through their gnawing habit they also cause considerable structural damage to woodwork, waterpipes, electric cables, etc.

## **Life Cycle**

The life expectancy of rats is around one year, during which time a female will typically breed five times. The average size of a litter is between seven and eight. Breeding occurs throughout the year but especially in the Spring and Autumn.

## **Control**

You will need professional help in controlling colonies of rats. Their ability to burrow, climb and jump, and the speed in which they breed and form new colonies, makes rats difficult to control.

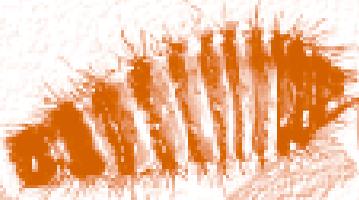
You can assist us by ensuring that your premises are in good repair making it difficult for rats to gain access, and by removing any sources of food and water or clearing areas which may offer shelter or nesting materials such as piles of timber or any areas of your garden which are overgrown.

In the event of infestation our Pest Control Officer will visit and survey the area to determine the most appropriate control measures which may include the laying of poison baits along rat runs and in the drainage system.

The baits must be left undisturbed and will be examined by our officer when a re-visit is made.

## **Safety**

All pesticides are applied by our qualified and experienced staff to ensure the safety of the public and to minimise damage to the environment.



# HIDE BEETLES

## Description

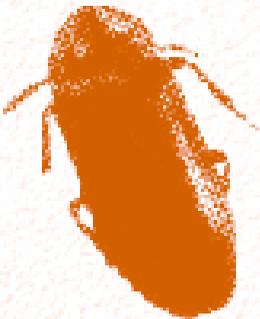
The Hide Beetle has become a well established pest within this part of the country. The beetle is black, about 10mm long, and the larvae an active bristly grub which grows to a similar length.

## Distribution

Hide Beetles breed rapidly in kitchens and canteens and are carried from place to place on furniture and household goods or the beetle may fly in during the summer. In blocks of flats they may spread via the service ducts and pipes.

## Significance

Hide Beetles are not recorded as being significant carriers of disease and their presence in houses is considered to be of nuisance value only. They may however, cause damage to stored commodities



and food due to the burrowing activity of the larvae as they feed.

## Life Cycle

The females lay up to 200 eggs on materials which are suitable for larvae development e.g. soft wood, food etc, usually beneath skirtings and fittings such as cookers and fridges in kitchens where they thrive in the dark warm humid conditions.

The eggs are white, 2mm in length. The larvae hatch out in about a week, are dark brown, hairy and feed on almost any dry or decomposing animal and vegetable material. They are very active and will avoid light. If disturbed they will curl up and feign death.

The full grown larva is 10-15 mm in length. When mature, the larvae will either:

- ❖ excavate holes in hard, inedible material in order to pupate, or
- ❖ pupate deep inside the infested commodity, or
- ❖ pupate beneath cookers, fridges, units etc. Evidence of pupation in these circumstances is highlighted by accumulating skin cases and this may be the first sign of an active infestation.

Generally the pupal stage is completed in 2-4 weeks and the full life cycle is 2-12 months.

## Control

The first step in control is to trace the source of the infestation. Infestations usually commence in the kitchen behind appliances and beneath fitted units where food debris may accumulate. Infestations may also spread into other rooms and normally occur beneath skirtings or furnishings.

All sources of infestation should be removed and the surrounding area vacuumed, paying particular attention to skirtings. The vacuum contents must be disposed of immediately thereafter to an external refuse receptacle.

Routine surveillance and regular cleaning are also very important.

Thorough residual insecticide treatments are vital where infestations are discovered. Our Pest Control Offices will treat any affected properties with an insecticidal spray around the boundary of the rooms at the junction between the walls and floors, behind equipment and fittings.

The treated area should be left undisturbed for as long as possible.

## Safety

All pesticides are applied by our qualified and experienced staff to ensure the safety of the public and to minimise damage to the environment.



## Useful Contact Numbers

**Environmental Health  
Council Offices  
Rosebery Place  
Clydebank  
G81 1TG**

**Tel: 01389 738290**



### **Additional Information available from Environmental Services**

As part of the Environmental Services Division's ongoing commitment to 'best value' we produce a series of information leaflets which cover some of the broad range of services we deliver.

#### **ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH**

GENERAL LEAFLET ON ENV.  
HEALTH SERVICES

NEIGHBOR NOISE PROBLEMS

DOG CONTROL SERVICE

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

#### **TRADING STANDARDS**

GENERAL LEAFLET ON TRADING  
STANDARDS SERVICES

YOUR RIGHTS WHEN BUYING GOODS

BUYING ON CREDIT

MONEY ADVICE

The Environmental Health Section are active in giving information on health issues related to our core functions.

To receive a list of information available please call

**01389 - 738652/27**