Insect Pest Factsheet

Case-making Clothes Moth

The Case-Making or Case-Bearing Clothes Moth (*Tinea pellionella*) can attack and damage any material such as wool, silk, furs and other objects containing hair or feathers

The adult moths are small (5-7mm long) and are similar to those of Webbing Clothes Moths but may show dark spots on the wings, are silvery grey to shiny light brown in colour, with dark greyish hairs on the top of the head. Case-making moths are generally more free flying

Adult moths can live up to a month. In heated buildings, two to three generations can develop in a single year. Development is delayed by temperatures below 12°C. They can, however, survive in low relative humidity.

Mated females can lay up to 50 eggs singly or in groups. At 1mm in size they are difficult to see. Eggs hatch in 4-10 days

The larva spins a cocoon around itself, leaving the ends open so that it can use its jaws and legs. It then eats as it crosses material, carrying its case with it (hence the name case-making or case-bearing).

In so doing, the larvae leave a trail of grazed textile or fur with some fragments of excreta or frass. Unlike Webbing Clothes Moth, the frass is loose and appears like small pellets.

The case often takes on the colour of the material that it consumes. The larva moults within the case and when fully grown it pupates within the cocoon and eventually the adult moth emerges to mate and lay eggs.

The primary means of detection of case-making clothes moth is the presence of silken cases that contain larvae. Empty or 'discarded' cases can still be found after the adult has flown indicating its previous presence.

One generation, from egg to adult, normally takes a year to develop with the adults flying in the summer months.

Clean material is less vulnerable to attack than soiled and good housekeeping measures, hot washing (at 50°C) and dry (solvent) cleaning are effective control measures.

A cool, clean, dry environment is the best method of preventing infestation.