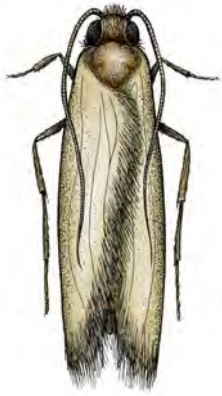


Webbing Clothes Moth



The Webbing Clothes Moth (Latin name *Tineola bisselliella*) is the most common clothes moth present in the UK.

The adult moths are small (5-7mm long), silvery-fawn coloured with their wings folded over their back when at rest. They fly poorly and are usually found near the ground and are often seen running over surfaces with a scuttling motion.

They shun light and can often be found in hidden places, under furniture, or at the edge of rooms with wall to wall carpet, or under the edge of rugs.

The adults shun the light, hiding in dark undisturbed areas and lay eggs on suitable food sources such as carpets, clothing, taxidermy etc.

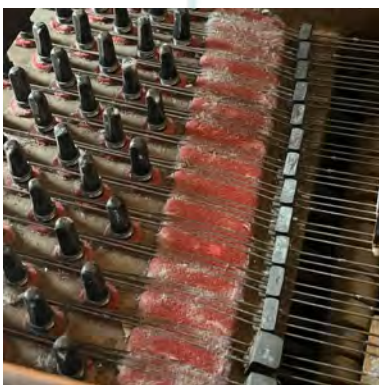
The larvae, hatching from the eggs, spin silk webbing which it leaves as a tunnel or sheet of webbing across the material under which it grazes. The webbing is usually matted with frass (excreta). Frass is frequently mistaken for moth eggs. However, frass pellets are hard and opaque whereas moth eggs are very small and translucent and vulnerable to physical damage.



The moth larvae can digest the animal protein keratin that is found in hair, wool, fur and feathers and so can cause serious damage to textiles, upholstery, natural history specimens, ethnographical objects etc. Infestations can start from adults flying in through open doors and windows or down disused chimney flues, from birds' nests or from infested objects being brought in.

One generation, from egg to adult, normally takes a year to develop with the adults flying in the summer months. In heated buildings, multiple overlapping generations can develop. Development is delayed by temperatures below 12°C. They can, however, survive in low relative humidity.

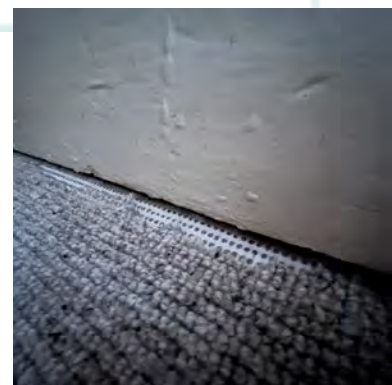
Clean material is less vulnerable to attack than soiled and good housekeeping measures, hot washing (at 50°C) and dry (solvent) cleaning are effective control measures. A cool, clean, dry environment is the best method of preventing infestation. Do not leave woollen materials undisturbed for long periods.



Piano felt showing evidence of Webbing Clothes Moth.



Characteristic webbing and cocoons under the edge of a wool rug



If left undetected and treated, wool carpets can be stripped to the backing material.