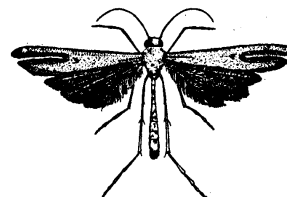


PEST CONTROL BULLETIN NO. 23

MOTHS AS FLYING PESTS



GENERAL INFORMATION

Sometimes moths enter homes and buildings and become a nuisance flying in or about the premises. Those moths which cause most concern in this manner because of their potential large numbers are scavenger moths and "millers", the latter being adults of cutworms and armyworms (Noctuids).

Moths may be found within buildings, having developed indoors. These could be clothes moths (refer to the pest control bulletin concerning *Carpet Beetles and Clothes Moths*) or they could be any one of several moth species which commonly infest and feed upon (as larvae) dried food products of various kinds, such as cereal, mixed flours, dried fruit, nuts, etc. This group is covered in the pest control bulletin entitled *Flour Moths and Pantry Beetles*.

Other moths, skippers, or even butterflies may occasionally enter buildings but ordinarily only do so in few enough numbers as not to be considered an indoor nuisance. However, they can be an indication of a pest on plants located in yards, fields, or orchards.

When in doubt as to the identity of a moth or insect, identification may be provided by taking a specimen to the offices of the County Agricultural Commissioner or the Orange County Vector Control District.

None of the flying moths are poisonous nor can they "bite" in any way.

Brown-dotted Scavenger Moth, "Scavenger" Clothes Moth (*Aedes fuscipunctella* Haworth), Brown-dotted Clothes Moth:

This small moth is found flying here throughout the year. It may enter buildings, usually at night when it flies, and is attracted to lights. It is related to clothes moths, and is not a usual fabric pest. They mostly feed on decaying grain and debris, often associated with birds' nests, where the tiny larvae develop yet are seldom seen. The moth rarely breeds inside residences. Incidentally, it can also breed in organic fertilizers.

Noctuids - Cutworm (Noctuidae) and Armyworm (*Phalaenidae*) Moths:

These common night flying moths are attracted to light in large numbers. Most of them are heavy-bodied and have a wingspread of one to two inches. The larvae or caterpillars of these moths are general pests of field and garden. Many armyworms have a life cycle of 50 to 60 days with three generations a year. The cutworms' life cycle is mostly about two weeks with one to four generations a year. They are found here throughout the year, but are most common in the summer and fall. The adult moths can only sip nectar of some flowers or they do not feed at all.

PREVENTION AND CONTROL

Properly fitted window screens and keeping doors closed will keep out most of the flying moths. Reduce exposed night light at outside buildings where the swarming moths enter. Spray pesticides near or at same if warranted. Eliminate weeds and accumulation of debris (locally and in vacant areas) as breeding sources. Also avoid spilled grain and feed, accumulation of dried feces, old birds' nests, and feathers.

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This information is provided to help homeowners with their pest problems. Insecticides may be purchased at nurseries, hardware, farm supply, and pet stores. If additional help is needed, contact with a licensed pest control operator is suggested.

No endorsement of trade names or products is intended nor is criticism implied of similar products not mentioned.
PRECAUTIONS

1. Handle insecticides with care and follow instructions on the label.
2. Do not use around open flame or exposed foods, and always clean food preparation areas after the use of pesticides.
3. Store out of reach of children and pets, preferably in locked cabinets.
4. Never keep pesticides in anything other than the original container.
5. Never reuse the pesticide container to store any other materials.
6. Dispose of all empty containers by placing them in the trash can for removal to the local disposal area.



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