

CIGARETTE BEETLE

INTRODUCTION

The cigarette beetle gets its common name because it attacks tobacco wherever it is stored. Its distribution is worldwide.

RECOGNITION

Adults about **1/16-1/8"** (2-3 mm) long and oval. Color light **brown**. **Antennae serrate** or sawlike. Punctures or **pits on elytra** (wing covers) irregular or **scattered in distribution**, not arranged in rows. As typical of anobiids, head and prothorax bent downward, making **head barely or not visible** from above and giving beetle a **strongly humped appearance**.

Mature larva about 1/16-1/8" (2-3 mm) long. Form C-shaped, with thoracic and abdominal segments about same width. Color white, with many long hairs. With well-developed 4-segmented legs. Drugstore beetle larvae have the same description.



BIOLOGY

The cigarette beetle female lays about 30-42 oval, whitish eggs in and about food materials. They hatch in 6-10 days in warm weather. There are 4-6 larval instars. The full-grown larvae pupate in silken cocoons covered with bits of foodstuff. The life cycle (egg to egg) requires 30-90 days and there are usually 3-6 overlapping generations per year. Minimum temperature for development is about 65°F (18°C). The adults may live from 23-28 days. They are strong fliers and are active in subdued light.

HABITS

The cigarette beetle attacks a host of items such as paprika, dry dog food, beans, biscuits, chickpeas, cigars, cigarettes, cocoa beans, coffee beans, cottonseed (before and after harvest), dates, dried banana, dried cabbage, dried carrot, dried fruits, drugs, flour, dried flowers, ginger, grains, herbarium specimens, herbs, peanuts, pepper, raisins, rice, yeast, seeds, spices, furniture stuffing, bookbinder's paste and books, and even insecticides containing pyrethrum. It also attacks animal material such as dried fish, fish meal, meat meal, leather, silk, and even dried insects. Dry dog food and paprika are most commonly attacked in the home.

Adults fly during the late afternoon and on dull cloudy days, and are attracted to light. They can be numerous enough to make both plant workers and occupants of nearby homes miserable by their presence.