

PEST FACT SHEET

INSECT PESTS OF THE HOME

ANTS: Few British ants that nest outdoors are likely to enter houses regularly. One species that does is the black ant. It travels widely in search of food, and clusters of ants can be found around the food source. Sweet foods are preferred.

The life cycle from egg to ant takes around 2 months and nests can remain for several years. Ants nests can be inaccessible and difficult to destroy.

BED BUGS: Are 5 mm long, reddish brown in colour and purple after feeding. They are blood feeding butts whose principle host is man.

Bed bugs can not fly, but can be transported on luggage, furniture or clothing.

An adult bed bug will lay 150 to 345 eggs in a lift time, and the life cycle takes about 9-18 weeks.

High standards of hygiene and housekeeping are unlikely to provide an adequate method of control.

To eradicate a professional pest control organisation should be used.

FLEAS: Are 1- 8 mm long, brownish in colour with a laterally compressed body. Adult fleas live as parasites of warm blooded animals (such as cats, dogs, rabbits and birds). Cats fleas are responsible for most flea infestations. Wall to wall carpeting and central heating has served to provide ideal conditions for flea survival.

A female flea can produce 800-1000 eggs during her lift time of 2 years. Eggs hatch in 1 week to produce larvae. Cats bedding may support up to 200 adult fleas.

Fleas can often easily be traced to pets. Regular cleaning will deny the insect breeding sites. Infested bedding should be destroyed or cleaned thoroughly.

WASPS: Are up to 30 mm long. Wasps nests develop during the spring and early summer. Wasps are a particular problem at the end of summer when the workers forage for food.

asps breed rapidly and at the end of the year a nest may contain 20,000 or more wasps.

Measures to control wasps can be aimed at the foraging wasps or at their nests.

Nests should only be treated with insecticides when activity around the nest is quiet. Protective clothing should be worn. Ideally this should be done by a trained Pest Control Operative.

COCKROACHES: Cockroaches pose a risk to health due to their ability to spread disease, in particular food poisoning.

There are many species of cockroach but three most common in this country are the German cockroach, the Oriental cockroach and the American cockroach.

Cockroaches are omnivorous and favour warm conditions. They remain hidden in dark places such as cracks and crevices in the building during the day and emerge at night to search for food.

The female lays eggs in a capsule which is carried at the rear of the insect until the young are ready to hatch. The nymphs take approximately 6 months to reach the adult stage.

Cockroaches cause damage to food stuffs and foul kitchen work surfaces and present in a catering environment.

SILVER FISH & FIRE BRATS: Silverfish are likely to be found in the kitchen or bathroom if present in the home as they like a high humidity.

They eat food crumbs and scraps and occasionally damage books by chewing the paper. However they are normally considered to be harmless.

The fire brat is an insect similar to the silverfish in appearance. It likes warm conditions and can tolerate a very dry habitat.

BOOKLICE: These are very small insects which are very active when disturbed. They like humid conditions and are commonly found in kitchens.

They feed on the minute moulds which grow on damp paper and when present are likely to be found in such places as in the bathroom or on stored food stuffs contained in card or paper packaging.

COMMENSAL RODENTS

RATS: The presence of rats poses a threat to public health. They both damage food stuffs by gnawing and by fouling and spread disease including the potentially fatal Weils Disease.

They are also destructive causing damage by gnawing materials within buildings such as plastic insulation sheath on cables.

Rats are present in the sewerage system and their presence within buildings often indicates a defect on the drains which has allowed the access.

Rats are shy and normally restrict their activity to the hours of darkness.

They are omnivorous and thrive on food waste, stored grains or animal feeds on the farm.

MICE: The house mouse is usually associated with buildings but may live outdoors during the summertime.

When present within a building the mouse makes its nest in a sheltered and concealed area within the fabric of the building structure or fittings such as kitchen units.

House mice particularly favour cereal based foodstuffs but they will happily exist on miscellaneous food waste found in the home environment.

The mouse causes damage to materials within buildings through gnawing and contaminates foodstuffs both by gnawing and fouling. When present in kitchens mice pose a threat to public health.