CLOTHES MOTHS

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Clothes moths can cause damage to several animal materials. These include wool, fur, hides, hair, and feathers. They are especially drawn to fabrics with sweat, food, or urine stains.

Damage may appear as thinner areas or holes where the larvae have grazed on the fibers. Damage to fur items will often expose areas of the hide, where the insects have clipped the hairs at the base.

They avoid light, are weak flyers, and tend to hide when disturbed. Therefore, you may not notice you have moths until damage is found on your items.

Prevention tips:

- Inspect used clothes, rugs, and furniture containing animal fibers (wool, fur, hides, hair, and feathers) before bringing them into the home.
- Check under collars, along seams, and in crevices of used items for larvae and damage.
- Larvae may hide in cases or tubes made from the fabrics they are eating, making them hard to see. Take your time to inspect items carefully.
- Use a flashlight to help you inspect fabrics. The larvae are small and can be difficult to see. Look for white caterpillars with dark heads, up to 1/2 inch long.
- Wash clothes in hot water or have them dry-cleaned before putting them in long-term storage.
- Store items in airtight bags and containers. Keep storage areas clean of dust, cobwebs, and pet hair.
- Use pheromone traps for adults in storage areas. Check regularly for signs of moth activity. Finding adults is a sign that there are larvae causing damage somewhere.

IMPORTANT: Always ***follow label instructions*** and take steps to ***avoid exposure***. If any exposures occur, be sure to follow the First Aid instructions on the product label carefully. For additional treatment advice, contact the Poison Control Center at 800-222-1222. If you wish to discuss a ***pesticide problem***, please call 1-800-858-7378.

Control tips:

- Identify your pest to target your control efforts. Clothes moths may be confused with pantry moths or carpet beetles. Consider contacting your local County Extension Service for help identifying a pest.
- When moths are found, remove all items from the area.
- Clean using a strong-suctioned vacuum in cracks and crevices to remove any debris. Wash down walls, shelves, and other surfaces with soapy water.
- Launder items in hot water for 20–30 minutes to kill eggs, larvae, and adult clothes moths. Dry clean items that cannot be laundered.
- Non-washable items can be placed in a Ziploc bag and frozen for 2 weeks to kill the insects. Allow items to return to room temperature before removing from the plastic bag.
- Larger items can be hung outside, beaten, and brushed to remove eggs and larvae. Adult females glue eggs directly on fabrics.
- Heavy infestations may require hiring a Pest Control Professional.
- If you choose to use a pesticide, always follow the label. Try a lower toxicity product first.
- If using mothballs or flakes to kill insects on items that cannot be laundered or dry-cleaned, always follow label directions. These pesticides produce a gas that is toxic to people or animals if they breathe it in.

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