

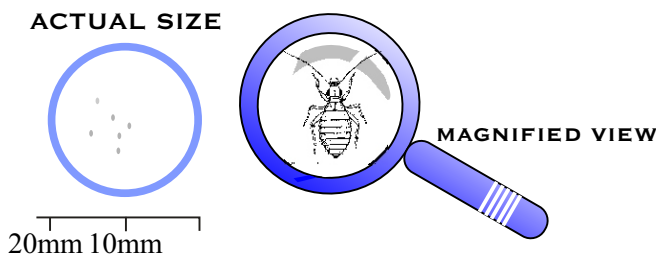
PSOCIDS

(book lice)

Pest Control Factsheet 1

PSOCIDS

Some people are finding to their dismay that their food cupboards and especially dry goods such as flour, milkpowder, sugar or semolina, have become infested with tiny grey or brown insects. They naturally wrongly assume that the products themselves are always at fault. The purpose of this leaflet is to explain what the insects are, and to tell you how to prevent them.



WHAT ARE PSOCIDS?

Psocids are common but harmless household pests, smaller than a pinhead, that can live in dry powdery type foods. They do not like the light but prefer to live in dark, warm, humid places such as the folds of packaging in food cupboards. They can live for about six months and in that time a female may lay up to 200 eggs. They feed on microscopic moulds and mildews which flourish in warm humid places such as the domestic kitchen.

They are not caused by poor hygiene; they are just as common in the cleanest type of homes.

Research has shown that the sorts of psocids (there are many different types) found in homes are rarely found where food is produced, so they are unlikely to be brought into the home in foods. They can be found in old books, carpets and other furnishings in the home, (Booklice and Dustlice are alternative names).

SO WHAT CAUSES THEM?

Psocids are associated with high humidity. This could be caused by new plaster drying out, or by condensation resulting from inadequate ventilation in the kitchen. There are many reasons but you can be sure that if you have psocids, you have humid conditions. The kitchen is likely to provide the conditions they need, and fitted cupboards provide suitable harbourage. With ideal conditions they can rapidly increase in number.

PUBLIC HEALTH SIGNIFICANCE

Minimal Significant

CONTROL MEASURES

- When you are cooking, boiling a kettle or even just using the washing machine or tumble drier, make sure the kitchen is properly ventilated.
- If condensation shows on windows it is being produced on all other surfaces as well and may lead to mould growth on which psocids thrive.
- Clean out your food storage cupboards regularly and make sure they are completely dry before you put the food back.
- Always keep dry foodstuffs, such as cereals suitably contained.

HOW DO YOU GET RID OF THEM WHEN THEY APPEAR?

- Dispose of infested food immediately.
- Clean out all the dust, crumbs etc.
- Always make sure the cupboard is completely dry before using it again.
- Foodstuffs in packets can be stored in airtight containers.
- Remedy the cause of the humidity to ensure a long term solution.
- Psocids may be controlled by treatment with a suitable residual insecticide on affected areas, and in particular the crawl spaces (cupboard joints, worktop joints, etc) which provide excellent harbourage.



ABERDEEN
CITY COUNCIL

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