

Cigarette Beetle

Lasioderma serricorne

Identification

Size (Actual Size) 📏	1/10 inch (2-3 mm) in length
Adult	Adults are oval shape and are reddish-brown in color. The wing covers are covered with little hairs but appear smooth overall. The head of the beetle is bent downward at almost a right angle to the body. The antennae are notched like the teeth of a saw
Larva	White to cream larva have a brown head and are 3/16 inch (4 – 5 mm) in length. They are covered in long hairs and can often be found curled into a C-shape.



Cigarette Beetle Adult and Larva

Larva Photo: Patrick Kelley, Insects Limited, Inc.

General Information

The Cigarette Beetle is worldwide in distribution. It is also called the Tobacco Beetle because of the damage it inflicts on stored tobacco (e.g. tobacco leaves, cigars, chewing tobacco, cigarettes). They can also be found in food storage areas and are known to chew through books, manuscripts, furniture fabrics and other organic materials. Their ability to eat the nicotine in tobacco, also leaves them resistant to several pesticides. The adult beetles are good fliers and are extremely light attracted. They can be monitored with pheromone traps and light traps quite efficiently. This cosmopolitan beetle was discovered in the tomb of King Tutankhamen in Egypt. It shows practically no change in its structure in the 3,500 years since. (Mallis 1997)



Life History, Food & Signs of Infestation

Insect Life Cycle Information	The life cycle of a cigarette beetle is dependent on the temperature (i.e. the lower the temperature the slower the process) and food source. The female beetle will lay approximately 100 eggs randomly on or close to the food source. The eggs will hatch in 6 to 10 days. The larval stage lasts for 35 to 70 days, during which time the larva feeds on the surrounding food source and avoids the light. The pupae stage takes 7 to 21 days. The adult beetles will live up to approximately 28 days. There can be overlapping generations especially in warmer climates.
Food & Feeding	These beetles have an extremely wide range of materials they will eat. The cigarette beetle will feed on dried tobacco products (e.g. cigars, cigarettes), stored food products (e.g. cereal products, pasta, rice, dried fruit, seeds, dried fish, chocolate) and many other organic materials (e.g. dried botanical specimens, medicines, book bindings, upholstered furniture that has been covered in flax tow or straw).
Signs of Infestation	Look for the adult beetles on their food and around light sources. Also look for the fine powder the larvae and adults leave behind after feeding or chewing. The eggs and larvae can also be detected on or near the food source. Often times there are tell-tale round holes bored straight into their food source (see photo to the right)



Dog biscuits attacked by cigarette beetle

Photo: Patrick Kelley, Insects Limited, Inc.