

Fumigants & Pheromones

Insects Limited, Inc.



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New Product: Freezer Treatment Bags

With the decreased use of chemical moth-proofing (remember moth balls?), the incidence of clothing and rugs damaged by the clothes moth has increased significantly in recent years. Freezing items of clothing can be one of the easiest and best options available for the general public but many are unsure of just how to go about that task. [Insects Limited](#) has started to market freezer-specific bags just for this purpose so that people can perform this treatment themselves in their own homes. We have known for some time that clothes moth adults, larvae, and eggs can be killed with exposure to freezing temperatures. Items that you wish to treat can be placed in the large metalized treatment bags and frozen in a home freezer (after you find space behind the hash browns and TV dinners), removed after one week, and allowed to warm up for at least 24 hours (to avoid condensation on the object). Clothing or treated objects can be left in the bag at room temperature to continue to protect the item or can be swapped out for the next round of clothing and the treatment will be repeated. The kit comes with 5 large bags that can each hold up to three full size ugly Christmas sweaters. This is a product that is safe, effective, and pesticide-free.

Let's discuss the process that you might go through to determine if freezing is for you. [Insects Limited](#) regularly advises frustrated and dismayed homeowners that are encountering this pest for the first time or have struggled to maintain control from year to year. The problem can quickly feel overwhelming after learning that there is no silver bullet or magic wand to get these pesky creatures out of your life for good. Ultimately, the long-term solution takes on a multi-pronged approach.

Assessment

The first prong is to assess the situation. You want to use monitoring tools like [pheromone traps](#) to see if you are dealing with a widespread infestation throughout the house or apartment, or if is coming from a single point source like a "new" sweater from the thrift store or a wool rug that you reclaimed from Grandma's storage unit.



Disposal

Next is disposal of the items beyond help. This is the worst part of a moth infestation and the call is up to you on each damaged item. Heavily damaged items that are beyond help should be removed promptly by placing them immediately in a plastic bag and then into an outdoor trash receptacle to avoid spreading eggs or larvae.

Treatment

The last step is to identify items you want to treat. Remember, you don't have to treat your whole wardrobe. Clothes moths are very picky eaters. They stick to the three main clothes moth food groups: wool, fur, and feathers. They almost never deviate from these three basic items. (I know you panicked when you found some holes in your cotton tees or saw them landing on your bath towel, but I promise it wasn't them and the moths don't like terry cloth! Clothes moth damage is ragged and messy. Watch a [video of clothes moths](#) in action.

You also don't have to treat at-risk items that you wear at least once a week. Clothes moths like to eat in peace and don't want to spend time with you out-and-about any more than you do with them.

So now that you have narrowed the list of items to treat to a much more manageable level, it's time to look at your options. The difficulty in treating for clothes moths with traditional insecticidal treatments is that they are often not approved for use directly on clothing. This leaves you with only a handful of other treatment options. Despite the damage they do and their reputation, clothes moths can be fragile creatures. Washing clothes with some of the older, top-loading, high-powered models of washers and drying the clothes with power-hungry dryers at the highest heat setting will kill all life stages of the clothes moth. Unfortunately, many of the clothing and objects the moths infest don't stand up well to this mechanical stress. There is also conjecture now that newer, more power efficient front-loading washers and low-heat energy efficient dryers do not have this same lethal effect on the moths and this is leading to higher moth populations. Another option is dry cleaning. Dry cleaning will kill all life stages but can become costly depending on how expansive your wardrobe and some dry cleaners will not accept clothing with an active moth population on it.

For years, [Insects Limited](#) has provided pheromone monitors to assist homeowners in locating clothes moth infestations and have also advised homeowners on both professional and at home clothes moth treatment options. We hope that by providing these new [Freezer Treatment Bag Kits](#), that we can allow frustrated homeowners to control damaging clothes moths themselves and do it safely and effectively.



To learn more about identifying clothes moth damage and frass, be sure to read [this article](#) by Pat Kelley.