

# Mediterranean Flour Moth

*Ephestia kuehniella*

## Identification

<b>Size (Actual Size)</b> 	3/4 inch in length (20mm), with a wingspread of less than 1 inch (25 mm)
<b>Color - Adult</b>	Adult forewings are pale gray with transverse black wavy bars and the hind wings are dirty white in color
<b>Color - Larva</b>	The larva is on average 1/2 inch to 2/3 inch (13 mm – 16 mm) and can have a coloring of a white to pink. The heads are dark and hard.

## General Information

Mediterranean flour moths are common moth pest of dried food goods in the kitchen or pantry. Since they feed on any items containing grain or cereal products, the Mediterranean flour moth can be responsible for many of the insect problems associated with the food industry.

The night flying Mediterranean flour moth is attracted to the indianmeal moth pheromone but the two species are active at different times of the day so they do not interact. Mediterranean flour moth larvae are notorious for producing copious amounts of webbing that will clog animal feed dispensers and packaging machinery in food processing plants and flour mills.

The adult male Mediterranean flour moth actively flies in search of females to mate with. The female moth will remain relatively quiet in darkened or shaded areas until mating occurs. The female moths look for food sources to lay their eggs after being mated. Food attractants are available that will attract females looking to lay eggs.



Mediterranean Flour Moth adult

Photo: Bugguide.net



## Life History, Food & Signs of Infestation

<b>Insect Life Cycle Information</b>	Generally, developmental time for the Mediterranean flour moth from egg to adult in room temperature with a good food source is approximately 50 days. Mating and egg laying begins almost immediately after adults emerge from the pupa (cocoon). Adult moths do not feed and die within 10 days. Female moths can lay from 116 – 678 small, pinhead-sized, white eggs on or near the dried food source that they will infest.
<b>Food &amp; Feeding Habits</b>	Mediterranean flour moth larvae will feed on grains, seeds, tree nuts, cereals, dried fruits, powdered milk, bird seed, dried pet foods and numerous other dry food goods. The larvae prefer broken grains to whole grains. It prefers coarser grades of flour as well as graham flour and corn meal.
<b>Signs of Infestation</b>	Look for the adult moths flying around areas where dried foods, pet food or bird seed is stored. They adult moths are most active at night. As the larvae (worms) of the Mediterranean flour moth feed, they produce a silken tubes of webbing on the surface of the food. The larvae will often be found inside the tubes of webbing, feeding vigorously. The larvae will remain on the food product until it is ready to pupate. The larvae will migrate away from the food source to pupate and can be found considerable distances from their food. Carefully inspect food containers, boxes and bags containing dried food goods looking for adult moths, larvae, webbing or the tell-tale cocoons in the lips of bags or the top corners of boxes.



Mediterranean Flour Moth larvae

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