Indian Meal Moths Identification and Biology

By DoMyOwn staff

The Indian Meal Moth is the most common moth pest found in homes, grocery stores, and anywhere dried pet foods are produced or stored.

Indian Meal Moth Identification

The Indian Meal Moth has a wing span of about 5/8 inch, with the outer one-third covered in reddish-copper scales. The hind wings are gray. Larvae look like white worms with brown heads.

Feeding Preferences

Indian Meal Moth feeding preferences include grain products, dried fruits (especially figs), powdered milk, seeds, nuts, graham crackers, chocolate and candies, bird seed, dried red peppers, dehydrated dog food, etc.

Signs of Infestation

- Perhaps the most indicative sign of Indian Meal Moth infestation is the clumpiness of infested materials. Clumps in the infested food are formed by groups of larva that are webbed together with strands of silk.
- Homeowners may notice small moths flying around kitchens, pantries or other rooms in the home in a zigzag fashion. They fly mostly at night and are attracted to lights.
- Larva (white wormlike pests with brown heads) may occasionally crawl up walls to the ceiling and suspend themselves from a silken thread.

Prevention and Control of Indian Meal Moths

- The best method to avoid stored-product pests is careful sanitation. Pantry shelves should be kept free of crumbs and stickiness.
- If you do locate an infested package, get rid of it immediately. The pantry or infested area can then be cleaned with soapy water, and the cracks and crevices vacuumed.
- When purchasing foods, check the packaging date to ensure freshness.
- Do not purchase food packages that look open or damaged.
- Utilize several pantry pest traps in and around the infested area.

Recommended Products

Grain Moth Trap
Indian Meal Moth Trap
Pantry Pest Kit

View our entire line of Pantry Pest Control products

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