



What's Bugging You?

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When trying to identify and control a pest or pests found in the home, many times they are not physically present, and only the damage or key signs of its presence are noticeable. Many home pests are active when one is asleep, or reside in places unable to get to when cleaning the house. One nice thing about most home pests is that they leave specific signs (droppings, shed skins, egg casings) or specific damage to indicate that they are around even if unseen. Below is a list of signs or damage that homeowners can use to help identify the pest or pests in the home. The information is adapted from "What's bugging me?" by J. M. Tenorio and G. M. Nishida.

Identification by Signs or Damage

Sign or Damage	Pest
Open webbing around house	spiders
Matted webbing in foodstuff, carpets, furniture	moths
Small, fibrous, or bristly cases, or almond-shaped or boat shaped brown or gray cases found around fabrics or clothing, or hanging on walls	moths
Brown or blackish egg-shaped or purse-shaped capsules found in dark places like kitchen drawers, cabinets, shelves, in boxes, and so forth	cockroaches
Small disc like frass, pellets, black droppings	termites, cockroaches, ants
Fine powdery like dust, usually droppings from furniture	beetles

Vomit streaks or dried dark spots on counters, walls, in cup boards	cockroaches
Holes, galleries, or chambers in furniture or books	beetles, termites
Holes, galleries, or chambers in wooden parts of the house	termites, carpenter bees, carpenter ants
Holes, abrasions, scrapings of fabrics, books, paper, carpets, hides, and other material	beetles, moths, cockroaches, silverfish, booklice
Small whitish (young) or brownish adults feeding on rice, grain, cereal products	beetles, moths
Wings scattered about on floors and other flat surfaces	termites, carpenter ants
Biting pets or people (pets of people and pets)	fleas, ticks, mites, bed bugs, ants, mosquitoes, centipedes, spiders
Stinging people	wasps, bees, ants

Identification By Habitat or Parts of House Insects are Found In

Location	Pest
In fabrics, carpets, hides, and similar materials	beetles, moths, cockroaches, ants
In wood, furniture, paper, books, cardboard, and similar material	termites, beetles, silverfish, booklice, cockroaches, carpenter ants
In foodstuff	beetles, moths, booklice, cockroaches, ants

In meat, cheese, other protein-based foods	beetles, flies
In garbage, trash, sewage, excrement (feces), and fermenting or rotting food	wormlike, filth flies, fruit flies, sap beetles
adult-like, but wingless	cockroaches
In damp areas, on mold, in bathrooms, on sinks, on refrigerators	booklice, cockroaches, millipedes, sow bugs, crickets, flies
Climbing walls (outside walls)	wasps, moths
Climbing walls (inside of house)	wasps, cockroaches, termites, flies

For more information about the description of these pests listed above, please contact your local Cooperative Extension Service.

This factsheet was part of a series on household insects written for the Pacific Daily News from September 1997 - November 1999. Content has been verified as of January 2017.