

LD
5655
A761
±57
no. 145
c.2
Spec

VIRGINIA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE

**VIRGINIA
TECH**

**VIRGINIA
STATE**

No. 145

October 10, 1985

HOUSEHOLD PESTS

There are a number of insects that are pests in and around the structural and ornamental parts of the house.

Old House Borer. The larvae of these wood-boring beetles are active in late summer and fall. Homeowners frequently hear the larvae chewing in the walls, floor joists, or attic beams. The first response is to think that the house is being eaten out from under them! Not so. Take the time to consider the advice of a few professional pest control operators. Fumigation should be considered only if the infestation is in several locations, and if the homeowner wants immediate control. Application of insecticide to the surface of the wood will help prevent reinfestation, but not stop larvae from feeding.

Angoumois Grain Moth. These small, pale colored moths frequently infest ornamental indian corn. They are often confused with cloths moths, which are about the same size. The grain moth adults will usually fly close to or remain on infested whole corn, including ornamental indian corn and popcorn. Control is difficult because it may be restricted to putting the material in a freezer for 7-10 days.

Firewood Insects. Reorganizing the firewood usually results in the discovery that there are carpenter ants or pine sawyers in some of the logs. There is little or no chance that those or any other insect will be making the switch to feeding on structural wood in the house. I do not recommend treating firewood with insecticides - just burn the infested logs early.

Yellowjackets. These social wasps will continue to visit trash cans and fallen apples through the first or second frost. These insects do not survive the winter and do not re-use nests the following year. So, control of yellowjackets in late fall is not necessary -- let the frost do it.



INSECT NOTES



Virginia Cooperative Extension Service programs, activities, and employment opportunities are available to all people regardless of race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, handicap, or political affiliation. An equal opportunity/affirmative action employer.

An Educational Service of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University and Virginia State University, Virginia's Land Grant Institutions, with U.S. Department of Agriculture and Local Governments Cooperating.

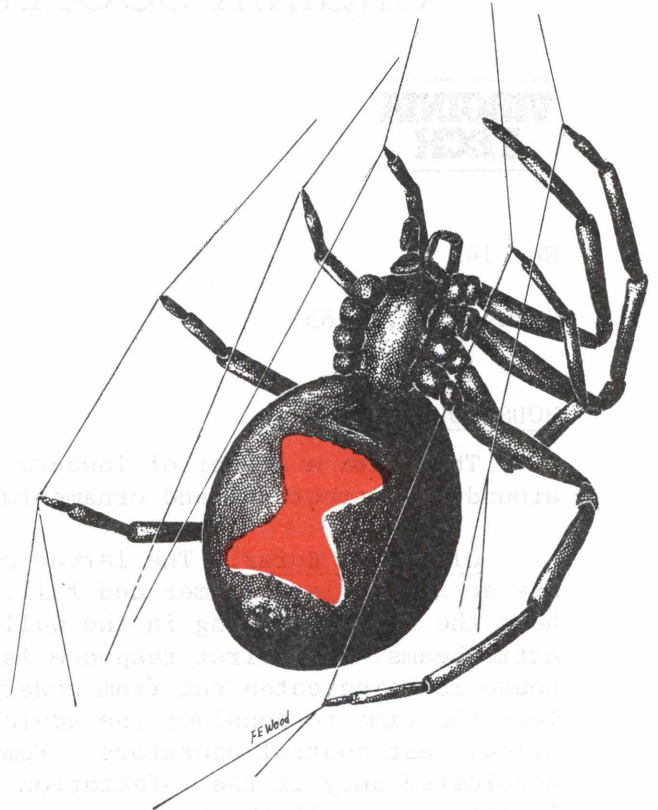
BLACK WIDOW SPIDER

Black Widow Spiders are common around wood piles, and are frequently encountered when homeowners carry firewood into the house.

The Black Widow is not aggressive. They will, however, bite instinctively when touched or pressed, and for this reason one should be very careful when working around areas where black widows may be established. Take proper precautions - wear gloves and pay attention to where you are working.

Black widow bites are sharp and painful, and the victim should go to the doctor immediately for treatment. It is important to recognize this spider and describe the symptoms accurately and fully so the physician can diagnose the trouble correctly.

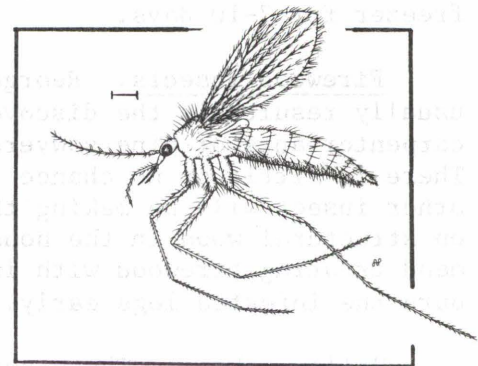
To control the black widow, carefully remove all materials where they might hide. They can be cleaned out of an area simply by knocking the webs, spiders, and round tan egg sacs down with a stick and crushing them under foot.



INSECT IDENTIFICATION - DRAIN FLIES

Drain flies (or moth flies) are small, dark, fuzzy, moth-like insects. They are often found clinging to the walls of bathrooms, kitchens or in the basement. They are weak fliers, typically flying but a few feet at a time. Although these flies do not bite, they can be an annoyance in the home.

Drain flies breed in polluted shallow water or the scum that often collects around drains. They are perhaps the most common insect inhabitant of sewage treatment plants. In the home, drain flies lay their eggs in the gelatinous material which accumulates on the sides of drains and overflow pipes, and the larvae feed on the decaying organic matter and microscopic plants and animals that occur there. Adults usually emerge in a week or two, although during the colder months of the year development may take longer. During the day adult flies rest on walls or on the sides of tubs and shower stalls. They become more active at night, hovering over drains, sinks and other breeding areas. Because of their small size drain flies are able to get into residences from outside, sometimes through ordinary window screen.



Control of drain flies should be aimed at control of the breeding sites. The most effective control method is to clean the drain pipes with a stiff brush, removing all the slime in which the flies breed. Sometimes it may be necessary to remove the trap to thoroughly eliminate the breeding media. Pouring water down the drain provides short-term control. Drain fly larvae are difficult to drown because they are able to trap an air bubble and remain submerged for a day or more.--Jeff A. Vaughan, Entomology

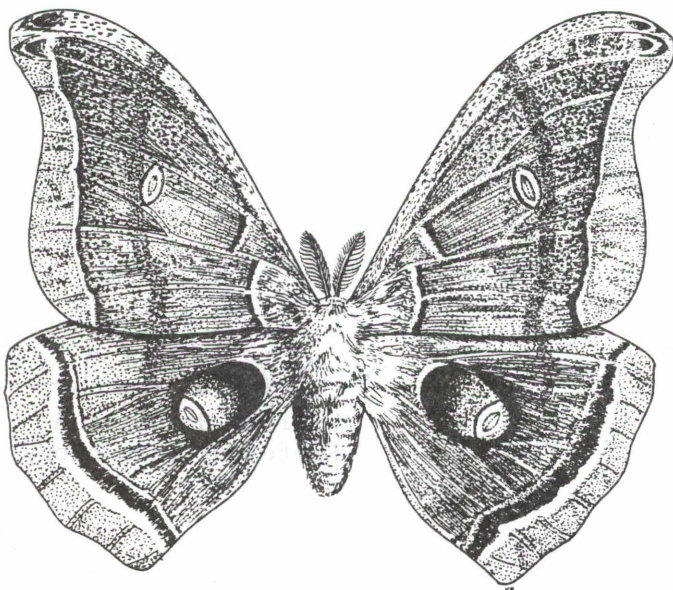
INSECT SURVEY



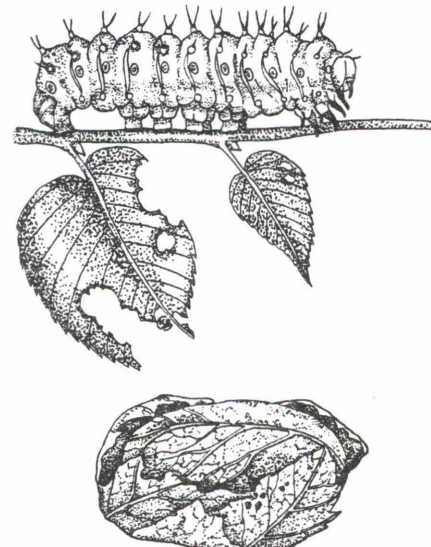
With the arrival of shorter days and cooler temperatures, general patterns of insect activity change. At the same time human outdoor activities also change and the result is that people come in contact with members of the insect world they didn't notice before. Among the common requests for information received in the fall by the Insect Identification Lab are questions concerning moth cocoons and insect damage to fallen leaves.

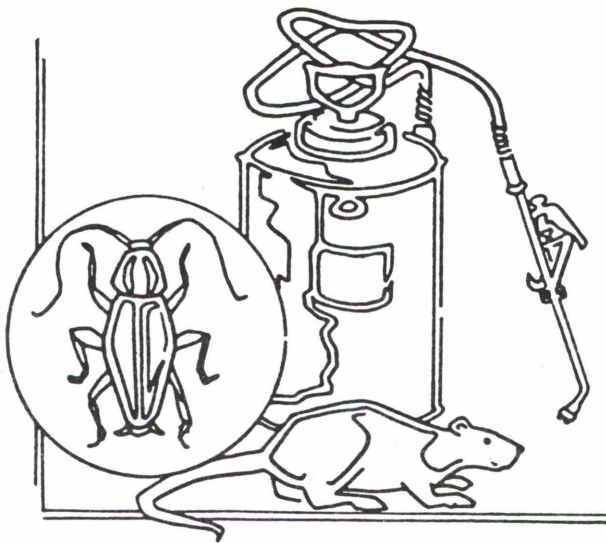
Many moths overwinter in the pupal stage and some of them construct protective cocoons. The ones most often sent in for identification are notable for their size, sometimes over two inches long. Cecropia moth cocoons are shaped something like a short sweetpotato and are attached lengthwise to twigs. Polyphemus moth cocoons are watermelon shaped and often incorporate leaves into their outer layer. They generally hang from a branch of the caterpillar's food plant. Luna moth cocoons are similar to those of the polyphemus moth but are normally found on the ground. Sphinx moth caterpillars, of which there are half a dozen common species, burrow into soil to pupate. They do not spin cocoons, but the pupae are easily identified by a handle-like structure which houses their developing mouthparts.

A menagerie of small insects live and feed on the leaves of shade trees. Most folks are unaware of their existence all summer long. Sometimes, though, when the leaves fall they notice evidence of insects and their curiosity is aroused. Leaf galls are abnormal growths of tissue induced by the feeding of insects and other organisms. They come in an endless variety of forms and sizes. Immature insects or mites live and feed inside the galls, but they will have matured and left by the time the leaves fall. Cast skins of aphids, leafhoppers, and lace bugs are left behind at each molt as the insect grows and they often stick to the undersides of leaves. These skins are usually white and formless, though definite legs are distinguishable and with magnification an expert can usually identify the insect which left them behind.



POLYPHEMUS MOTH





PEST CONTROL SHORT COURSE

The 37th annual Pest Control Conference is planned for November 11, 12, 13, 1985. The two and one-half day program is presented by the Department of Entomology and the Virginia Cooperative Extension Service.

This short course is designed specifically for pest control operators, technicians, sanitarians, inspectors and others engaged in pest control. The program is composed of lectures and laboratory sessions presented by Virginia Tech faculty and staff, and experts from other institutions, and pest control companies.

The short course will be held in the Continuing Education Center on the Virginia Tech campus in Blacksburg. The C.E.C. has rooms available for those attending the meetings.

REGISTRATION. The registration fee for the Conference is \$50.00; this includes a banquet, coffee, and a program packet. ALL REGISTRATIONS MUST BE COMPLETED IN ADVANCE -- THERE WILL BE NO REGISTRATION AT THE DOOR! THE DEADLINE IS NOVEMBER 1.

Contact W. Robinson, 215 Price Hall, Virginia Tech, for conference registration forms.

William H Robinson
Professor Entomology