

It is a good time of the year to prepare your pantry for the upcoming seasons. Grains, flour, nuts, sweets, pasta, dried fruits and pet food, in addition to other foods, are all susceptible to pantry pests. Beetles and moths are the two most common groups of pantry pest insects. Some pests enter your pantry via packages and products brought in; others can enter the home via windows, doors, crevices, etc.



The adult Indian meal moth is the most common moth found on food products in the home.

Prevention

The best way to prevent pantry pests is to inspect all packages for signs of infestation when you bring them into your house. Keep your pantry shelves clean. Store all nuts, grains, flours, cereals, rice, dried fruits, pasta, pet food, and sweets in appropriate containers with tight fitting lids. Zip lock bags are not appropriate for pantry storage.

Management

At least once a year remove and inspect all items in your pantry, and wash the shelves with hot soapy water. Vacuum the corners and the edges to remove any crumbs or eggs. Check under shelf paper. Destroy anything that has an odor, change in taste, color or texture. Often by the time you notice a pest, it has infested products that have been on the shelf a long time or are in opened packages. Any contaminated products should be removed, sealed in a zip lock bag and thrown away in outside trash immediately.

Pheromone traps are an effective way to monitor and remove the pest. Pheromone traps are pest-specific. The traps are usually effective for three months. Watch the traps weekly to monitor infestation.

Identification

Most often insect pests include weevils, beetles and moths: Indian Meal Moth, Cigarette Beetle, Rice Weevil, Warehouse Beetle, Red Flour Beetle and Grain Beetle. An insect pest is most easily identified in the adult form. Larvae can be hard to differentiate and treat.



The adult red flour beetle commonly attacks a variety of foods.

Signs of pests include webbing, holes in food or the food packaging, or sticky secretions.

The following resources are helpful in providing additional information and insect identification dealing with pantry pest insects.

[How to Get Rid of Pantry Pests \(video\)](#)

[UC IPM News: Dealing with Pantry Pests \(page 3\)](#)

[UC IPM Pantry Pest Notes 7452](#)

[UC IPM Pantry Pests Quick Tips](#)

[UC IPM Video Library: Home & Garden](#)

Koehler, C. S. et al. 1982. *Common Pantry Pests and Their Control*. Oakland: Univ. Calif. Agric. Sci. Leaflet 2711.