

Psocids (or Booklice)



Description

Psocids (pronounced so-sids) otherwise known as booklice are tiny grey/brown insects between 1-2mm long which can be found in or around dry foods such as flour, sugar, semolina and powdered milk.



Lifestyle

- Psocids are not caused by poor hygiene and are just as common in clean homes both old and new.
- Their preference is to live in dark, warm, humid places e.g. folds of packaging in food cupboards - they dislike light and disturbance.
- Psocids feed on a variety of food, such as flour, and live for approximately 6 months during which time the female may lay up to 100 eggs.
- As psocids prefer areas of high humidity they are often found in kitchens where fitted cupboards and food products provide the moisture and darkness that attracts them.
- Psocids increase rapidly in warm conditions so summer/autumn is the time of year they are likely to be discovered.

Prevention of Psocid Infestations

- Keep all dry foods in cool, ventilated cupboards.
- When condensation occurs in your kitchen (during washing or cooking) open the windows or use an extract unit.
- Packages of food that have been opened should be used up quickly.
- Potential hiding places should be sealed with paint or mastic.
- Clean kitchen cupboards regularly to remove dry food from crevices, but do not make chipboard wet as this may encourage mould growth.
- Use a vacuum cleaner and dispose of the contents immediately in an outside waste bin.

Control of Psocid Infestations

If you discover psocids in your food:

- Do not use insecticides because of the danger of contaminating food.
- Dispose of all infested packages in an outside waste bin.
- Thoroughly clean the cupboards using a vacuum cleaner.
- When replacing foodstuffs, after cupboards have been cleaned, ensure they are not reintroduced.
- Place dry goods in a plastic bag in the freezer for 24 hours to kill any eggs or juveniles that may be hidden in the folds of packaging.
- Remove labels from tinned food, bottles and jars to prevent psocids hiding behind the paper (**note: mark the contents of the tin, jar or bottle with a felt-tip pen**).
- The freezer treatment (in a plastic bag) is also suitable for books or other objects which may harbour psocids or their eggs.