

# Furniture Beetle [Woodworm] & Wharf Borer Control

Advice to Householders



# Furniture beetle

## Characteristics

Furniture beetles are very small and brownish in colour, with an almost cylindrical body. The thorax (the part of the body between the head and the abdomen) is typically arched to form a hood, which almost conceals the head. They have medium length, clubbed antennae. The larvae of different species of furniture beetles are very different to distinguish between but they are all soft, curved and have very small legs and are better known as woodworm. The frass (dust) from the borehole consists of lemon-shaped gritty pellets.

Wharf borers vary in length from 7-12mm and are rather soft in texture. They are yellowish brown in colour, but their wing tips are black. The antennae of the male have 12 segments whilst the antennae of the female has only 11 segments. The eyes, sides of the thorax, legs and ventral parts are blackish and the whole body is covered with dense yellow down.



Furniture Beetle ▼  
Exit Holes in Timber



Wharf  
Holes in



Borer ▼    Exit  
Timber ▼

# Furniture beetle

## Behaviour

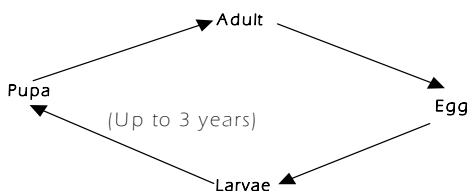
The furniture beetle is a very common pest of timber and furniture and is or was present in the majority of houses. The adult beetle emerges during the summer months after eating its way out of the timber through circular flight holes. It is at this point that the frass (wood dust) falls out of the timber. The beetles can fly but will only live for a couple of weeks. Shortly after emergence from the wood they mate and the eggs are laid in crevices on the end grain or unplanned timber, and often in old exit holes. The larvae prefer softwoods but can live in hard woods, but they do not attack the heartwood.

The wharf borer larvae do not attack sound timber, they will only attack timber that is damp and has started to rot. They do not bore definite shaped or sized holes but tend to work indeterminate spaces that are plugged here and there with long torn fibers of wood. Again infestations tend to take place in softwoods but occasionally in oak. The wharf borer, when found in a house, may have come from the outside; having emerged from ships timber or wharfs. They also thrive in pilings and in structural timber in damp cellars.

## Significance

The furniture beetle, woodworm and wharf borer have no impact on public health. They are simply a household pest on the grounds of nuisance. The wharf borer will only attack damp, rotten timber, but the furniture

cause far  
Neither  
the



beetle can  
more damage.  
insect will attack  
heartwood.

## Life cycle

# Furniture beetle

## FURNITURE BEETLE

In furniture this can be controlled by applying a proprietary woodworm killer. All the surfaces of the furniture need to be coated, both polished and unpolished, and inject the fluid into a few of the flight holes. Woodworm in structural timbers can be treated with proprietary brands that are available from builders' merchants and DIY shops. However in both cases it is imperative that you fully adhere to the manufacturers instructions.


## WHARF BORER

The beetles and larvae can be treated with the use of a puffer pack for insect control. Check the label and ensure that the one you have selected is suitable for beetles, and follow the instructions carefully. In addition however, it will be necessary to eliminate the rotten wood and carry effective repairs as well as to decrease the humidity of the premises by increasing the ventilation of the property.

### Customer Services

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[www.babergh.gov.uk/babergh/pests](http://www.babergh.gov.uk/babergh/pests)

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