

# Cigarette beetle

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Coleoptera: Anobiidae, *Lasioderma serricorne*

SIZE: About 1/10 inch (3mm)

COLOR: Yellowish-brown

DESCRIPTION: The cigarette beetle is one of the most common household insect pests in Virginia. It can be found throughout the year, but seems to be more common in the fall and winter months.



The adult beetles are oval, about 1/10 inch long, and are covered with small hairs which give them a silky, yellowish-brown color. Adults are strong fliers and prefer subdued light and temperatures over 65 degrees Fahrenheit.

HABITAT: As its name implies, the cigarette beetle is a pest of dried tobacco either in the stored, bundled form or in cigars, cigarettes, and chewing tobacco. It also feeds on book bindings and leaves. The larval stages of the cigarette beetle can feed on a variety of stored products including grain, cereal products, ginger, raisins, dates, pepper, dried fish, drugs, and seeds.

LIFE CYCLE: The female produces about 100 eggs, and they are deposited on or near the available food supply. The wormlike larvae are slightly smaller than the adult beetles. Larvae are creamy white except for the yellow head and brown mouthparts. Larvae become full grown in about 40 days. The entire life cycle can be completed in 45-50 days, and there may be 3-6 generations a year.



TYPE OF DAMAGE: A serious pantry pest, the range of food makes them difficult to control. There have been larval infestations in dried flower arrangements, causing the flowers to drop or all the petals to fall.

CONTROL: The first step in control of the cigarette beetle is to find the source of the infestation. This means inspecting all of the dried foods in the infested cabinets or drawers. Once the infested material is found, it should be destroyed. Clean all the cabinets and drawers with a vacuum cleaner (then throw the cleaner bag away!). Chemical sprays should be used only as a last resort!

Infestations of dried flowers may be "fumigated" by placing a small amount of moth crystals and the flowers in a plastic bag for a day or two.