



COMMAND PEST CONTROL

Information sheet number 54 - Death watch beetle



Appearance:

Size: 6 - 9mm in length. Markings: Chocolate brown in colour, patches of yellow hairs.

Breeding:

Small clusters of three or four eggs are laid on the surface of rough wood, in cracks or just inside flight holes. When first laid they are sticky and adhere to each other. They are whitish and oval in shape, and measure about 0.65 x 0.45mm. The average number of eggs laid is between forty and sixty. The larva of death watch beetle wanders about in an agile manner before selecting the precise crevice or old flight hole in which it will commence to bore. The larva grows to almost 15mm.

The life cycle is thought to average between four and five years. Under the best possible conditions for this species, the life cycle takes place in one year. Lengths of life cycle of ten years and over are known. The egg stage lasts from two to five weeks, according to conditions. It normally emerges between the latter part of April and the beginning of May. It is to be found in a pupal chamber immediately beneath the wood surface. The adult stage lives less than six weeks, larvae remain in wood for 3 to 10 years

Food:

Outside the sapwood, the beetle only attacks wood which has been previously decayed by the fungus *Coniophora cerebella*. In Winchester Cathedral, an infestation followed after damp-related decay by another fungus, *Phellinus megaloporus*.

Where do Death-watch beetles live?

Detection: Exit holes in timber approx. 3mm in diameter, small piles of gritty wood-dust on timbers. Sound of adults tapping, particularly March - June. The beetle often has dust from emergence hole sticking to it, obscuring red-brown colour. Infestation indicated by perfectly circular flight holes and by circular bun shaped pellets of wood dust produced by the larva.

For more advice and control recommendations contact us on 01787 248049