

# The Moth: \$200 Million Despoiler

Consider the poorly-fed vulnerable woolsens and furs for as long as four years.

For one thing, the diminutive clothes moths, with a wing spread of only a half-inch, don't eat at all. All they're interested in is...yes, sex. They have no food hunger at all.

The clothes moths are really imagoes, as biologists call them.

Having emerged from their cocoons, the imagoes promptly start perpetuating the vicious life cycle of their kind. The female begins laying eggs for as long as 24 days, depositing a total of 200 to 300 deep in the nap of wool or at the base of the hairs of fur. Having completed her mission, she dies.

The male may zoom around another week or so, when he, too, dies. Chances are any clothes moth on the wing is a male, as a female heavy with eggs simply runs when disturbed.

IN EIGHT or 10 days in a warm room, the eggs hatch; in a cool place they require three to four weeks. Then comes the real culprit of the family, the translucent white caterpillars just a millimeter long.

These voracious youngsters immediately begin feeding on the animal fibers in which they hatched. Ordinarily, it takes from six to eight weeks for them to hit their stride; in cold and adverse conditions, they'll work away at the

Estimates have been made that the clothes moth larvae of the world eat about a thousand tons of wool every year. In the U.S.A. alone, it's said they do \$200 million of damage every year. Practically all homes are infested with them to some degree.

ONE WAY to reduce moth infestation and damage is to provide a cedar closet or other lined container for woolsens and furs, according to a spokesman for the Aromatic Red Cedar Closet Lining Manufacturers Association.

The pleasant aroma of the aromatic red cedar, it has been known for centuries, is a successful moth repellent. Yet, the fragrance of the wood is pleasant to humans. This dual-personality wood, as a result, has become popular as a closet liner in thousands of homes.

A researcher, pondering what moth larvae fed on before clothes were invented, figured they were scavengers that dined off carrion. He theorizes they gradually adapted themselves to furs, leathers, wool cloth and other animal products.

Some experts hold that the



THIS SPACIOUS closet also is a basement room divider. One side is "hers" and the other is "his." Each side has three full-size access doors. Her closet is on one side, his on the other. Since all interior surfaces are covered with moth-resistant aromatic red cedar wood, the threat of moth damage is eliminated. Write a postcard to the Aromatic Red Cedar Closet Lining Manufacturers Association, 39th floor, 221 North LaSalle St., Chicago, Ill. 60601 for a free plan.

three-stage clothes moth family, due to the strange (and costly) diet, have a nutritional problem because they don't get vitamins. They observe that may be the reason the larvae go after food stains in clothing as a No. 1 target.

Members of the association point out the importance of cleaning or thoroughly brushing garments before storing them in an air-tight cedar lined closet. Food stains especially should be eliminated as a precaution against moth damage.

BRUSHING is a good way to make sure the tiny eggs, which are smaller than the head of a pin, are removed. Cleaning fluids, of course, have a similar effect.

Moths go back to Biblical days. When Job was feeling especially depressed, he compared himself to a moth-eaten garment. Moths were

just one of Job's problems. They are the problem of most families in temperate climates all over the world. "A cedar-lined closet is the easiest and most economical way to eradicate moth damage in a home," said the spokesman for the association. "Weatherstrip the door and put the tongue-and-grooved cedar boards on every surface, including the floor, ceiling and door. The greater the odor, the greater the protection."

## Aroma Of Cedar Lasts For Over 100 Years

How long does the aroma of aromatic red cedar last? Very long, say researchers for the Aromatic Red Cedar Closet Lining Manufacturers Association.

Cedar used to build houses and barns years ago, when it was more plentiful, still retains the pleasant aroma 125 or 150 years later when torn down for other uses such as pencil stock.

"In fact," an association spokesman says, "many of those most familiar with cedar claim that the older the wood, the more fragrant it is."

"The forest service quotes a statement attributed to men who made a business of digging up cedar logs long buried in the swamps of New Jersey. These men reported the fragrance of the wood to be as great as that of fresh-cut timber. In some cases, it was estimated these logs had been submerged for more than one thousand years."

An association member received a letter enclosing a photo of an old cedar water main laid 105 years previously.

However, much of the old pipe was not removed.

"Fifty-five years after that, a telephone company was excavating for a conduit system. The section of water main shown in the picture was dug up at that time. It was buried under about five foot of earth and was in an excellent state of preservation."

He wrote that the wood was sound, with no decay apparent.

"If the aroma of the cedar seems to diminish with the years," the association spokesman said, "it's only because the wood pores have been clogged with dust or lint. Dust the boards occasionally, and once every year or two give them a light sanding with fine sandpaper. You'll find the aroma is thus renewed."



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