



What's Eating Your Collection?

Checking objects for signs of infestation

Using blunder traps to monitor for insects is an important part of any IPM programme, but they can only show part of the problem. Traps only catch those insects that have chosen to move around within the space. If insects have a plentiful food source, they have no need to move around and may only do when the object on which they were feeding has been reduced to a pile of dust. It is thus important to check vulnerable objects on a regular basis as well as traps.

What should I check?

Check objects that might be vulnerable to insect attack, i.e.

- wool
- fur
- feathers
- silk, principally soiled silk
- wood
- plant based materials
- paper based materials, especially if soiled and/or damp
- starchy materials such as salt dough

Pay particular attention to those objects that are kept in warm, dark, damp (60% or above), undisturbed conditions, e.g. boxed objects in damp stores.

Mark boxes and cabinets to show where vulnerable objects are located. This will reduce the number of boxes/cabinets that need to be checked.

Check the parts of objects that are dark and undisturbed e.g. underneath pocket flaps, the back the underside (especially of rugs and carpets) and inside, such as car boots.

Check the environmental conditions and ensure that housekeeping is carried out regularly, especially in areas that contain vulnerable objects.

Checking should occur at least annually, more frequently if infestations are present.