



What's Eating Your Collection?

Further advice: Non-pest insects

Why are these insects present in the building?

Insects enter buildings for a number of reasons: to find somewhere to hide in cold weather, to hibernate or just by random exploration.

How do these insects get into the building?

Insects only require very tiny gaps for access. If non-pest insects are present, they indicate that there are gaps in the building. These may be under doors, around windows, through ventilators or through gaps in the building structure.

Should I worry about them?

Non-pest insects pose no threat to the collection but are often an annoyance to people. Dead insects can act as a food source for pests. In large numbers, they may encourage an infestation of insect pests. Non-pest insects may also act as indicators of pest problems. Large numbers of spiders show that they have a ready food source, which may be pest insects. Korynetes beetles are not themselves an insect pest, but they do indicate high numbers of Death Watch beetle (*Xestobium rufovillosum*) or Furniture beetle (*Anobium punctatum*). See the [Death Watch beetle](#) and [Furniture beetle](#) fact sheets.

Hibernating insects should not be removed unless absolutely necessary as they pose no harm and are often insect species that are useful as natural predators in the garden.

Nesting wasps and bees may pose a problem to the public, particularly if their nest is up a chimney or in a public thoroughfare. Local councils usually have a service for removing wasp nests.

Cluster flies can be a particular nuisance. They enter buildings in the autumn to hibernate. They produce a scent trail that encourages other cluster flies to come to the same place and this can result in very large numbers of flies being present in one location year after year. Many of the flies die and their bodies are ideal food for carpet and spider beetles. Good housekeeping is an important tool in dealing with this insect. See the [Cluster Fly fact sheet](#).

Where can I get further advice?

Pest Management a Practical Guide. David Pinniger. Collections Trust 2009.

Pest Management in Museums, Archives and Historic Houses. David Pinniger. Archetype

Publications 2001.

Collections Trust Website www.collectionstrust.org.uk

British Pest Controllers Association www.bpca.org.uk

Who can I ask?

Jane Thompson Webb, Collection Services Manager, Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery.

Jane_Thompson-Webb@birmingham.gov.uk

Care of Collections Group. If you are a member of Icon (Institute of Conservation), you can log onto the group forum and post a question in the Care of Collections (CCG) area. If you are not a member, you can send a question to the office and ask them to forward it to the group on admin@icon.org.uk

Museum Development Officers or your MLA.

Pest Control Companies. If you don't have a relationship with a pest control company, the British Pest Control Association may be able to help and they maintain an accreditation system for pest control companies. Look for the letters BPCA. www.bpca.org.uk

Environmental Health department at your local council.