

# WOODBORING INSECTS



Common Furniture Beetle  
(*Anobium punctatum*)



Larvae

A NUMBER OF DIFFERING SPECIES HAVE EVOLVED, BUT, IN THIS COUNTY THE MOST WIDESPREAD BY FAR AND THEREFORE THE MOST IMPORTANT ONE TO DEAL WITH IS THE COMMON FURNITURE BEETLE (*ANOBIUM PUNCTATUM*). THIS DEVELOPS MAINLY IN SOFTWOODS OR IN THE SAPWOOD OF HARDWOODS SUCH AS OAK OR ELM, BUT IT IS PARTIAL TO HEARTWOOD WHICH HAS BEEN SOFTENED BY FUNGAL ATTACK.

THE FEMALE OF THE ADULT BEETLE BEGINS THE CYCLE BY LAYING A BATCH OF UP TO 80 EGGS IN CRACKS AND CREVICES ON THE SURFACES OF THE TIMBER THAT SHE HAS CHOSEN AS THE HOME FOR HER OFFSPRING. SHE WILL INSTINCTIVELY SHY AWAY FROM ANY TIMBER SURFACE, WHICH HAS BEEN TREATED WITH AN APPROPRIATE INSECTICIDE AND WILL LOOK ELSEWHERE. THE EGGS HATCH INTO TINY GRUBS (LARVAE) WHICH EAT THEIR WAY INTO THE TIMBER, WHERE THEY WILL STAY FOR TWO OR THREE YEARS, EATING AND GROWING, AT THE SAME TIME CREATING TUNNELS THROUGH THE WOOD, GENERALLY ALONG THE GRAIN. THIS GOES ON UNNOTICED FROM THE OUTSIDE SURFACE OF THE TIMBER, BUT, WHEN THE GRUBS REACH MATURITY THEY TURN TOWARDS AN OUTER SURFACE AND THEN GO THROUGH A METAMORPHOSIS SIMILAR TO THAT WHICH TAKES PLACE WHEN A CATERPILLAR TURNS INTO A MOTH OR A BUTTERFLY. IN THIS CASE, THE INSECT EMERGING IS A SMALL BEETLE, BETWEEN 2.5 AND 4MM LENGTH, WHICH CUTS THE LAST FEW MILLIMETRES OF WOOD TO EMERGE THROUGH THE FAMILIAR CIRCULAR "FLIGHT HOLES", ABOUT 1.5 TO 2MM IN DIAMETER. EMERGENCE OF THE BEETLES USUALLY TAKES PLACE DURING THE MONTHS OF MAY TO AUGUST, BUT THIS PERIOD MAY BE EXTENDED IN CENTRALLY HEATED PROPERTY.

SERIOUS STRUCTURAL DAMAGE IS NOT LIKELY TO OCCUR IN ONE OR TWO GENERATIONS AT THE COMMENCEMENT OF WOODWORM ATTACK, BUT AS A SINGLE PAIR OF BEETLE IS CAPABLE OF PRODUCING UP TO EIGHT OFFSPRING, THE IMPORTANCE OF ERADICATION OF THE PEST IN THE EARLY STAGES OF AN INFESTATION IS OBVIOUS. FORTUNATELY, THERE ARE INSECTICIDES AVAILABLE WHICH ARE CAPABLE OF COMPLETELY ERADICATING THE PEST WHEN CORRECTLY APPLIED.

SHOULD YOU REQUIRE ANY FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE DO NOT HESITATE TO CONTACT OUR OFFICE.