



Bed Bugs

Cimex lectularius

Color: Unfed adults are mahogany; engorged bed bugs are red-brown. Nymphs are nearly colorless.

Legs: 6

Shape: Flat, broad oval when unfed; swollen and elongated when fed.

Size: Adults are 1/4 inch long. Nymphs range from 1.3 mm to 4-5 mm.

Antennae: Yes

Region: Found throughout U.S.

Intro

The common bed bug (*Cimex lectularius* Linnaeus 1758) is an ectoparasite insect (a parasite which lives on the outside of the body of the host) of the family Cimicidae. Bed bugs feed only on the blood of humans and other warm-blooded hosts. Although they have a cryptic behavior and can conceal themselves in tight cracks and crevices, bed bugs are often found in bed parts, such as mattresses and box springs, hence the common name.

Habits

Bed bugs like to travel and are good hitchhikers. They will hide in suitcases, boxes and shoes to be near a food supply. They are elusive, nocturnal creatures. They can hide behind baseboards and in cracks, crevices, and folded areas of beds, bedding and adjacent furniture, especially mattresses and box springs. Bed bugs can also hide in electrical switch plates, picture frames, wallpaper and nearly anywhere inside a home, car, bus, or other shelter. Bed bugs usually come out at night for a blood meal. However, they are opportunistic insects and can take a blood meal during the day, especially in heavily infested areas. Bed bugs usually require 5-10 minutes to engorge with blood. After feeding, they move to secluded places and hide for 5-10 days. During this time, they do not feed but instead digest their meal, mate, and lay eggs.

Habitat

Bed Bugs like to hide in small cracks and crevices close to a human environment. They can be found behind baseboards, wallpaper, upholstery, and in furniture crevices. Bed bugs are also known to survive in temporary or alternative habitats, such as backpacks and under the seats in cars, busses and trains.





Threats

Although bed bugs can dine on any warm-blooded animal, they primarily dine on humans. Bed bugs do not transmit diseases, but their bites can become red, itchy welts.

Prevention

- Vacuum suitcases after returning from a vacation.
- Check your bed sheets for telltale blood spots.
- Consider bringing a large plastic trash bag to keep your suitcase in during hotel stays.
- Carry a small flashlight to assist you with quick visual inspections.
- Never bring second-hand furniture, especially mattresses and box springs, into a home without thoroughly examining for signs of a bed bug infestation. You might consider having a pest control professional inspect the furniture as it is difficult to detect an infestation if you are untrained.
- Regularly inspect areas where pets sleep for signs of bed bugs.
- Bed bugs are elusive creatures, so it is imperative to seek professional pest control to address an infestation.