

Mediterranean Flour Moth

The Mediterranean Flour Moth is somewhat larger than the Indian Meal Moth.

Development and damage is similar to the Indian meal moth, except the larvae live and feed in small silken tubes they spin. Although flour is the favorite food, grains, bran, breakfast foods and pollen in beehives are also attacked. The life cycle takes about 10 weeks. The webbing and matting of the larvae often cause the greatest amount of damage by this insect, whether it is contaminating foods in the home or clogging industrial machinery.



The adult moth is a pale-gray color and from one-fourth to one-half inch long, with a wingspread of slightly less than one inch. The wings are marked with two indistinct, black zigzag lines. The hind wings are a dirty white. This moth is easily recognized by its characteristic pose when resting. When at rest, the moth extends the forelegs which raises the head and gives the body a sloping appearance. None of the other house moths have this characteristic pose.



The female moth lays from 116 to 678 small white eggs in accumulations of flour, meal, waste grain, nuts, chocolate, beans, dried fruits and other food sources. Commonly, the eggs are attached to the food. Within a few days (three days at eighty to ninety degrees F) the eggs hatch into small whitish or pinkish larvae, with a very hard and dark colored head and small black spots on the body, that immediately begin to spin silken tubes.

The larvae remain within the tubes until fully mature, which takes approximately forty days. When fully grown, the larvae will leave the immediate area where they were feeding and wander about in search of a location to spin silken cocoons. Within the cocoons, they transform into reddish-brown pupae. After eight to twelve days the adult moths emerge. During very warm weather, the Mediterranean flour moth may complete its life cycle (egg to adult) in five to seven weeks.