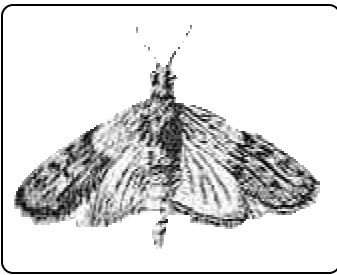


Indian Meal Moths



Why all the fuss?

We receive many calls from florists, crafters, growers, and others. The callers have discovered Indian meal moths or their larvae (worms) in their flowers, and they are in a state of panic. And for good reason. These insidious pests have invaded and destroyed their beautiful dried flower arrangements, repulsed their customers, and infested their dried and preserved materials in storage.

Why do we know so much?

Our experience with the Indian meal moth started 1991, at the time we were manufacturing a product containing dried flowers. After having assembled and packaged over 5,000 of these items, our manager, noticed the Straw Flowers and Sinuata in the arrangements were falling apart inside the packaging. We immediately opened several packages and were devastated to find little whitish worms with reddish colored heads crawling amongst what remained of our beautiful flower arrangements. We panicked. We called the county extension office. We called 5 different exterminators. We had a professional exterminator gas our entire building. We threw away 5,000 packaged dried flower arrangements into the dumpster. Indian meal moths were found in practically every box of dried flowers and finished product on our premises.

Where did they come from? How did the moths do so much damage? What could be done to prevent this from happening again? These were just a few of the questions we asked ourselves over and over. "The whole ordeal was a nightmare." Let our experience with these pests help you prevent the same costly and unpleasant disaster we had to cope with. Read and follow the suggestions we offer in this newsletter and you can reduce your risk of Indian meal moth infestation to zero!

How do you avoid them?

Don't wait for a similar situation to happen to you. There are simple and effective precautions that can be taken, and products available that effectively eliminate moths and prevent their return.

Exclusion. Doors and windows of work and storage areas should be closed and properly screened. Store your insect-free dried and preserved flowers in sealed containers to prevent infestation.

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Initial Handling of Dried Flowers. Inspect purchased or self-prepared materials prior to bringing them into storage and work areas. They could have become infested during preserving activities, or when held in storage prior to shipment. Reject materials found to be infested.

Inspection Not all suppliers are aware their products might contain Indian meal moths or their larvae. It will only be a matter of time before a Indian meal moth infestation occurs to wholesalers or suppliers of dried and preserved flowers who don't have an ongoing moth control program in place. It can't be stressed enough, how important it is, to carefully inspect every box of dried and preserved florals you receive on your premises, for any sign of Indian meal moths or their larvae. Immediately contact your supplier and arrange for the suspect materials to be returned. There is no excuse for the dried flowers that you purchase to be infested with Indian meal moths.

Once you have determined your dried materials to be free from moths, store insect-free materials in sealed containers for the purpose of excluding any moths which might be present on your premises.

Pesticide Strips An added barrier against both male and female moths and their larvae would be the use of insecticide impregnated strips (referred to as Prozap "Insect Guard") which are registered for use in homes and businesses against moths. Here, at The Flower Depot, we have found Insect Guard strips to be a very effective moth control method. In addition, Insect Guard strips are inexpensive, clean, easy, and safe.



Check Monthly Sale Flyer for pricing.

How do you get rid of them?

Dried and preserved flowers and arrangements that are infested with Indian Meal Moths or other pests can be salvaged by using fumigation techniques or pest strips. High temperature (130 degrees for 1 hour) or freezing temperature (0 degrees for 3 to 4 days) "may be effective in killing some of the life stages of moths in some situations. However, from our own personal experience, the freezing of infested dried materials (14 days at 0 degrees) to kill moth larvae has not been effective.

To Order Call Toll Free:
1-800-678-2099



Insecticides.

It is important to understand that it is the responsibility of the end user to read the label and follow the label instructions and precautions for the specific product in hand to ensure its proper and legal use for the task at hand. Remember, the label on the pesticide you are going to use is the Law. Any deviation of the label in regard to the use of the product is illegal.

The intent of generating sufficient concentrations of insecticide to kill insects in any of their life stages by activating and placing home fogging or fumigation devices in a sealed container, does not constitute a legal use of those products. Until recently, "Insect Guard" strips used in a similar manner would be considered illegal. However, the directions on the new label for Prozap "Insect Guard" strips specifies their product can be placed in a sealed garbage can, or other container, thereby concentrating the impregnated insecticide, improving its effectiveness.

What are they?

The Indian meal moth is an insect found worldwide. Its categorization as a pest stems from the fact that moth larvae have been recorded feeding upon and contaminating more than 80 different commodities including nuts, dried milk, dried fruits, dried vegetables, spices, cacao, chocolate candies, biscuits, popcorn, marshmallows, pancake batter, cereals and various grain products, garden seed, herbarium specimens, dead insects, dog biscuits, bird seed, and wheat weaving and dried floral arrangements.

What do they look like?

Life Stages There are four life stages: egg, larva, pupae and adult. Eggs are ovoid, .5 millimeters in diameter and whitish, or yellowish-white. Pupae are contained within silken cocoons. Newly formed pupae are yellowish-brown. Moths are 5 to 10 millimeters in length with a wingspread of 16 millimeters. Upon emergence, moths are very colorful (head and thorax are reddish-brown; abdomen grayish-brown; front one-third of fore wings is silvery-white or gray).

Why are there so many?

Generalized Life History. Indian meal moths are sexually mature and capable of mating immediately after they emerge from pupae. Female moths live up to 2 weeks and are capable of depositing up to 400 eggs each. Eggs are deposited singly or in clumps on or near potential food sources.

Newly emerged larvae begin feeding immediately. There are 5 to 7 larval stages. Mature larvae either pupate where they are feeding or wander about before selecting a hidden or protected site (crack or crevice) in which to prepare silken cocoons within which they pupate.

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Generations Per Year. Under indoor conditions, where temperatures are "comfortable," Indian meal moths are capable of continual development. With ideal temperatures and relative humidity (86 degrees F and 70 percent, respectively), development from egg to adult requires 3 to 4 weeks. In indoor situations 7 and 8 generations per year have been reported by various authors.

To make a long story short

Eliminating and Preventing Indian meal moths is simple, inexpensive and easy by developing a plan and following the steps in this article.

1. Carefully inspect every box of dried or preserved flowers on your premises for signs of moths.
2. Do not accept any shipment of flowers that contain moths or their larvae (worms). Return any suspect materials immediately.
3. Monitor for moths that find their way onto your premises.
4. Locate Pest Strips throughout work and storage areas to eliminate adult moths and their larvae.
5. Store insect-free materials in sealed containers.
6. Be vigilant in inspecting and monitoring your premises for any sign of moths and take immediate steps to protect your dried materials before a problem occurs.

What is a Pest Strip?

An Insect Guard strip is an insecticide impregnated plastic strip, enclosed in an attractive unobtrusive looking dispenser. It is not a nasty looking, glue coated fly trap type of device.

Do Pest Strips Have a Strong Odor?

There is no strong chemical odor associated with pest strips. They do have a slight sweet smell if you are very close to them.

Are Pest Strips Messy or Difficult to Use?

Insect Guard strips are not messy and they are very easy to use. Just remove the strip from its foil wrapping and place it in the included dispenser. All that is left is to hang the strip where you want to eliminate moths, flies, or mosquitoes.

Do Pest Strips Really Work?

Yes. Insect Guard strips kill adult moths and their larvae. New labeling for the Insect Guard strip will allow for the placement of the strip in a sealed container, such as a plastic garbage can, along with moth infested materials, thereby generating sufficient concentration of insecticide to eliminate both adults and larvae.

How Long do Pest Strips Last?

Once an Insect Guard strip is removed from its foil wrapping it will continue to be effective for at least 4 months.

Check Your
Monthly Catalog
for pricing.

To Order Call Toll Free:
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