

Use Pheromone Traps to Locate Indian Meal Moths Infestations

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The most common moth found in homes is the Indian meal moth. The moth is about 1/2-inch long and grayish in color. When not flying, it rests on the wall by sitting at an angle, with its wings folded.

The larval stage of this moth primarily feeds on seeds and nuts and grain-based processed foods, including dry pet food. It is particularly fond of peanuts. Some of the more unusual food sources we have seen have been dried flower arrangements, Indian corn, dog biscuits or treats and hedge apples.

The moths lay eggs near the food sources. Eggs hatch into tiny larvae that feed under webbing at the surface of the food. After a couple weeks of feeding the larvae crawl away from the food to pupate in cracks and crevices. They emerge as adults to repeat the cycle.

People can bring infestations home in bird seed and infested products from the grocery store. The Indian meal moth is the #1 stored product pest in warehouses and food processing plants. While most



Pheromone traps can be used as a monitoring device to alert you to Indian meal moth infestations.

commercial food warehouse and processing plants control pests, it is always possible for some small infestations to be missed.

Indian meal moth infestations can take place any time of the year because our homes are warm.

The key to eliminating Indian meal moths is to locate and discard infested foods. Freezing or refrigerating uninfested food will prevent infestations.

One helpful tool is a pheromone trap which is available locally in many hardware and discount stores. (Safer Pantry

Pest Trap is one brand.) It can also be found and purchased on the internet. This trap uses the female sex pheromone which attracts the male moths. Because this only captures male moths, it may not eliminate the infestation. It is best used as a monitoring device to alert you to a small infestation (or reinfestation) before it spreads.

These pantry pest traps are odorless (to humans) and last for several months. Because they can attract moths from 40–50 feet, only one trap is usually needed in a kitchen/pantry area. Place the trap on the top of the refrigerator or hang it in the middle of the kitchen, where slow moving air currents will carry the pheromone.

The Indian meal moth is the most common moth infesting stored foods, but there are many small grain and flour feeding beetles which infest your food.

Photo by Barb Ogg

Clothes Moths Not Common in Nebraska

When people see tiny moths flying around the home, they often think of clothes moths. But, in Nebraska, clothes moths do not survive very well because our climate is too dry. Clothes moths are more of a problem in more humid areas of the U.S.

The most common insects damaging wool, furs and natural fabrics in Nebraska are carpet beetles. These oval beetles do most of

their damage in the summertime, so laundering and protecting clothing during the summer is important.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

UNL Extension in Lancaster County educational resource "Fabric Pests" available at the extension office or online at <http://lanaster.unl.edu/pest/resources/fabricpests010.shtml>

FOR MORE INFORMATION

UNL Extension in Lancaster County educational resource "Managing Pantry Pests" available at the extension office or online at <http://lanaster.unl.edu/pest/resources/pantry-pests304.shtml>

ewf needs volunteers

Volunteers are needed for **earth wellness festival** on Wednesday, March 21 and Thursday, March 22 at Southeast Community College in Lincoln. Approximately 3,000 fifth-graders participate in this annual event that involves students in creative and innovative environmental education activities.



Each year, over 250 volunteers take part in **earth wellness festival activities**. As classroom escorts, bus greeters, presenter and registration assistants; volunteers are essential to the success of this event. You may choose to volunteer one or both days, all day (8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.) or morning only (8:30 a.m.-noon). In return, you receive a festival T-shirt, a free lunch, an invitation to our celebration party following the event and an opportunity to participate in a rewarding volunteer experience.

Please contact Meghan Sittler at 472-2712 or via e-mail at msittler2@unl.edu for more information.

Build a Bat House

Soni Cochran
UNL Extension Associate

Bat house construction can be an environmentally friendly and rewarding activity. Putting up a bat house, however, doesn't guarantee bats will use it.

In Nebraska, the big brown bat (*Eptesicus fuscus*) and little brown bat (*Myotis lucifugus*) are most likely to live in bat houses. Both species are commonly found living in attics, barns and other structures.

If you are considering a bat house, it is best placed in rural locations such as farms, acreages or in natural areas where habitat is already available. You are more likely to attract bats to a bat house if you put the houses in areas where bats already live. If you currently have problems with bats living in your home and plan to evict them, installing a bat house outdoors and nearby, may encourage them to move into your bat house and not another human dwelling.

When looking at bat house designs, bats prefer larger houses over small ones. The bat house should be at least 24" tall x 16" wide x 4" deep. The house should be multi-chambered and the wood should be rough cut. The wood used in construction should be free of arsenic-based wood preservatives. Never paint the interior of a bat house. The exterior can be protected with a water-based paint or stain in medium or dark tones (avoid black because it may cause the house to be



too warm).

Bats are more likely to occupy houses installed at least 12 feet above the ground, with at least 20-30 feet of clear flight space around the bat house. The house should be exposed to sunlight for more than seven hours per day. You can install the house on a pole, the side of an outbuilding or on a tree.

Make your bat house project a family activity. Building and installing bat houses can teach children valuable skills. They'll learn about basic woodworking, bat conservation and how humans can co-exist with wildlife in a mutually beneficial manner.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

For detailed information, including bat house plans and installation information, read UNL Extension NebGuide "Bat House Construction and Installation" available at the extension office or online at www.ianrpubs.unl.edu/sendit/g1575.pdf

Fertilizing Crop Land with Biosolids

Educational Workshop, March 6

To learn about Lincoln's Biosolids program, attend an educational workshop, Fertilizing Crop Land with Biosolids, held Tuesday, March 6 from 3:30–8:30 p.m. at the Lancaster Extension Education Center, 444 Cherrycreek Road, Lincoln. Presented by extension and City of Lincoln personnel, the workshop is aimed at farmers who might want to participate in the Biosolids Land Application program, though anyone may attend. Please preregister by Friday, March 2 by calling 441-7180 and ask for Karen Wedding. If you have any questions, please call and ask for Barb Ogg or Dave Smith.



- Workshop attendees will learn:
- using biosolids will reduce fertilizer costs and increase yields
 - biosolids improves soil tilth, especially on poor or eroded soil
 - biosolids increases organic matter and water holding capacity
 - how wastewater is processed and made safe for application
 - how regulations determine application rates and locations
 - how GPS and GIS technology is used in Lincoln's Biosolids Program

Program will also include a tour of the Theresa Street Wastewater Facility.

Biosolids are organic solids separated from wastewater and biologically processed during wastewater treatment to make them safe for land application. UNL Extension in Lancaster County coordinates distribution and application of biosolids to agricultural cropland for the City of Lincoln Wastewater and Solid Waste Division.

Potential Benefits and Hazards of Bats

The bats found in Nebraska eat only insects. Where bats are plentiful, their foraging for insects can be a significant factor in reducing insect pest populations. Some insects are also deterred by bat echolocation. Echolocation is what bats use to find their prey.

Bats also present potential dangers. Bat houses increase the likelihood of human-bat encounters. Risks can be reduced by teaching children (and other adults) never to handle bats and by keeping vaccinations of pets current. Place fencing or ornamental plantings around the base of the bat house site to reduce access to the colony. If a human or pet comes in contact with a bat, even if it doesn't appear to bite, contact a physician.