

True Powderpost Beetle

Lyctus spp.



GENERAL INFORMATION

Lyctus spp. are known as true powderpost beetles. The name “powderpost beetle” can also commonly apply to several species of three closely related beetle families: Lyctidae, Anobiidae, and Bostrichidae. Lyctids have noticeable finer frass and smaller exit holes than the others. The frass has the consistency of talc and does not feel gritty. Powderpost beetles can be found in dead, as well as dried and cured lumber. Some of the common lyctic powderpost species are *Lyctus brunneus*, *Lyctus lineareus* and *Lyctus planicollis*.

SIGNS OF INFESTATION

The main signs of an active infestation are small accumulations of fine powder below exit holes in wooden objects. Rasping sounds or ticking sounds from the wood is also an indication. Powdery frass or exit holes may not be indicative of an active infestation. Damages incurred are not evident until adults cut holes and emerge during an active infestation. At this time the powder becomes visible.

FOOD SOURCES

True powderpost beetles only attack the sapwood of large-pored hardwoods such as oak, ash, hickory, myrtle, and mahogany. *Lyctus brunneus* has also been found in bamboo furniture. The larvae usually eat along the grain and avoid cutting across other tunnels. They cannot digest cellulose and hemicellulose and attack the cell contents such as starch, sugars, and proteins. They can also eat fungi found in wood. Optimum wood moisture content for infestation is 16%.



DIAGNOSTIC MORPHOLOGY

Adults:

- Flattened, slender, dark brown to nearly black
- Cylindrical body
- Generally range from 3 to 6 mm long



Immature Stage:

- Mature larvae are “C” shaped
- Creamy white in color with dark brown mandible
- Have three pairs of hairy, spinelike legs immediately behind head

LIFE CYCLE

Mating occurs after the female emerges from the wood. Eggs are laid within the first week and are deposited within pores of wood or other cracks and crevices.

CONTROL & TREATMENT

Infestations of adult beetles and eggs have been controlled successfully by use of low oxygen atmospheres. Prevention includes avoiding the introduction of contaminated wood into your collection. Moisture control is also important as the beetles require specific moisture levels.

Fact Sheet: True Powderpost Beetle

Photo credits:

Lycid adult laying eggs and Lycid larvae: USDA Forest Service Archive, USDA Forest Service, Bugwood.org