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Brown-dotted Clothes Moth

Niditinea fuscella

CAUTION

PREDATOR:
INVESTIGATE CAUSE

GENERAL INFORMATION

This small moth is widespread in western Europe, though it has been introduced nearly worldwide. This moth is part of the fungus moth family (*Tineidae*). The adult brown-dotted clothes moth is 7mm – 8mm in length, with a wingspan of 14mm. The wings are pale brownish-yellow, mottled with darker specks and spots, while the abdomen is brownish-yellow. The head bears a tuft of brownish-red hair. The caterpillars feed on dried animal and plant material, most often in bird nests and poultry houses, and infrequently on cloth and fiber products. Outdoors, they are found in bird nests, leaf litter from fallen leaves, and decorative wood mulch around structures. Indoors, they are often found in attic spaces.

SIGNS OF INFESTATION

The Brown-dotted clothes moth adult male is highly attracted to the sex pheromone of the webbing clothes moth. It is quite common to find them in pheromone traps designed for webbing clothes moths. Often, the source of Brown-dotted clothes moths emanates from leaf litter, bird nests or wood mulch areas outdoors. Presence of moths and caterpillars in blunder traps and pheromone traps is often the first sign of infestation, as well as the presence of caterpillars on or around its food source. Adult moths will fly beginning in late afternoon from May to September, depending on location.

FOOD SOURCES

The larvae prefer to eat bird feces and dried feathers, so dried bird skins and bird taxidermy mounts are of particular concern, especially if stored in an attic space.



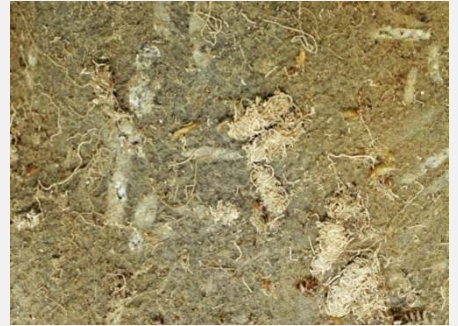
DIAGNOSTIC MORPHOLOGY

Adults:

- 7 mm- 8 mm in length
- Wingspan up to 14 mm
- Wings are pale brownish-yellow, mottled with darker specks and spots
- Abdomen is brownish-yellow
- The head bears a tuft of brownish-red hair.
- The antennae are moniliform



- Actual size of adult moth on left



They have been known to eat wool, dried peas and dried fruit, bran, rose petals, and even pigskin bookbindings. They have also been known to frequently infest poultry houses.

LIFE CYCLE

The life cycle of the Brown-dotted clothes moth undergoes complete metamorphosis from egg to larva to pupae to adult.

The pupal cases are formed within the food source and use material from the actual food. These are roughly the same length as the adult moth, 7 mm – 8 mm.

CONTROL & TREATMENT

Monitoring for Brown-dotted clothes moth should be performed using the sex pheromone lures for webbing clothes moth. *N. fuscella* should be treated much as any other clothes moth in a museum environment. Isolation and/or removal of its food source(s) from the museum environment will be crucial



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Fact Sheet: Brown-dotted clothes moth

Credits & Acknowledgments

<http://bugguide.net/node/view/503930>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Niditinea_fuscella

<https://insectslimited.wordpress.com/tag/brown-dotted-clothes-moth/>

Image Information

Image credit: *Niditinea fuscella* adult in lower left corner of page 1. Copyright status: CC BY 2.0, status asserted here: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/33398884@N03/6057127828/> Attribution: Ben Sale

Image credit – Ventral image of adult in glue board courtesy of Patrick Kelley, Insects Limited, Inc.

Image credit: in Diagnostic Morphology section – Image of Brown-dotted clothes moth pupal cases found beneath a mummified human corpse in Poland. Image taken from "The effect of larder beetle (Coleoptera: Dermestidae) long-term feeding in low temperature conditions" Marek Michalski, 2014 found online at:

https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Marek_Michalski6/publication/283463272_EAFE_2014_Michalski/links/5639215708aed5314d221bb7.pdf