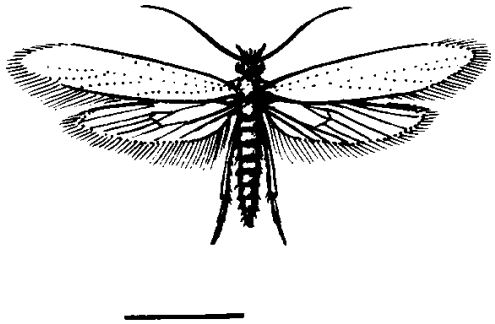
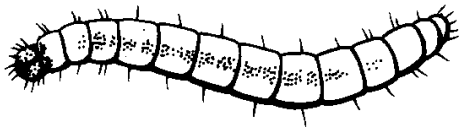
WEBBING CLOTHES MOTH **Lepidoptera: Tineidae** *Tineola bisselliella*

DESCRIPTION



Adults are buff colored with tufts of reddish-golden hairs on the head. The body is covered with shiny golden scales. The wings are narrow, with a fringe of long hairs on the margins, and without spots. The wingspan is about 12 mm. **Larvae** are shiny, creamy-white and about 12 mm long when mature.



(after KS Agric. Exp. Stn.)

ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE

The webbing clothes moth is the most serious fabric pest in the United States. Larvae feed on fabric and materials such as wool, fur, hair, and feathers. Larvae feed within a tunnel constructed of silken threads and filled with debris and excrement. Larval feeding causes irregular holes in fabric and in heavy infestations little is left of the food material.

DISTRIBUTION AND LIFE HISTORY

This pest occurs throughout the world. Females begin laying eggs singly or in groups of one or two or more on fabric or other suitable food materials, often within a few days after emerging. Eggs hatch in four to ten days and the larvae begin tunneling into the food material. Larvae construct a feeding tunnel that is fixed within the food material. Larvae feed for four to six weeks and then pupate in a silken cocoon. Adults emerge in two to four weeks, mate, and lay eggs for another generation. Adults are not attracted to lights. There are at least three overlapping generations each year under favorable conditions.

MANAGEMENT AND CONTROL

Preventative measures are the best methods of controlling this pest. Preventative sanitation such as good housekeeping to reduce lint accumulations and storing clean garments in tight containers in plastic bags will help reduce the likelihood of infestation. If possible, locate the source of the infestation and discard the infested food material, or place in a freezer or in dry heat (see later). Using "moth balls" containing paradichlorobenzene (PDB) does not control clothes moth infestations. If placed in nearly airtight containers, PDB may have some fumigating activity, but homeowners should not depend on the use of PDB to control infestations. Also, using cedar products or storage in cedar-lined closets or chests, has little direct effect on controlling clothes moths. Placing infested clothing or other infested materials in a freezer for three to four days at -20 ^{O}F will kill clothes moths. Exposing infested materials to dry heat for four hours at 40 to 41 ^{O}C also will kill clothes moths. The use of chemical protectants in storage areas or on fabrics will serve to protect the fabric from infestation. If infestations are present, treatment with registered insecticides will control this pest. Infestations in furniture may require complete fumigation, which should be done by a licensed applicator.