

Indian Meal Moth

Order: Lepidoptera

Family: Pyralidae

Genus/Species: *Plodia interpunctella*

Description: The wingspan of the Indian Meal Moth is 5/8" to 3/4" wide. Forewings are silvery gray where they attach to the body, with outer 2/3 of wing a coppery brown. The mature larvae are about 1/2" long and yellow green, light brownish or pinkish with a brown head and cervical shield.

Habitat: the range of the Indian Meal Moth is worldwide and they are found indoors in homes, food processing plants and grain storage and processing plants.

Life Cycle: The adult female lays 100 to 400 eggs on the larval food source over a 1 to 18 day period. Larval development requires a few weeks up to about 40. There are usually 4 to 6 generations per year depending on the food supply and temperature. They usually overwinter as larvae. Mature larvae often move away from infested materials to pupate in cracks and crevices. They are more active at dusk and attracted to light.

Economic Importance & Management: The Indian Meal Moth is a major pest of stored products. The larvae prefer flour and meal but feed also on whole grains, dried fruit, nuts, candy, chocolate, beans, crackers, cookies and dry pet food. The larvae produce webbing over the surface of the material upon which they are feeding. This webbing contains large amounts of frass (feces). All infested items should be discarded and uninfested portion put in insect proof containers in the freezer. Shelves, cracks, crevices and other potential areas should be thoroughly cleaned.

References: *The Audubon Field Guide to Insects and Spiders*, Lorus & Marjery Milne
PCT Technician's Handbook, Dr Richard Kramer
Photos: OSU Ken Gray Insect Collection



Adult Moth



Larval stage