**Webbing Clothes Moth and Case Making Clothes Moth**

**Segment for Week of 24 January 2022**

This is Steve Rulison bringing you information on shore friendly living and gardening from the Eastern Shore Master Gardeners and Virginia Cooperative Extension. If you've noticed holes in your wool sweaters or carpet, they have likely been made by the webbing clothes moth or case making clothes moth.

The webbing clothes moth, Tineola bisselliella, is commonly found under wool carpets; in folds of wool curtains, tapestries, and fabrics; or where animal hides rest on a floor or against another surface. The larva is a pale, shiny, hairless caterpillar that measures up to 13 mm (0.5 inch) long. Sometimes the caterpillars take on the color of the wool on which they feed because the dye shows through their bodies. The caterpillars make webbed tunnels or patches of webbing for protection. They also leave numerous pellet-like droppings. The adult webbing clothes moth is a very small, metallic buff-yellow moth with long, narrow wings and a tuft of long hairs on the head.

The casemaking clothes moth, Tineola pellionela, is commonly found on yarn, wool clothes, wool rugs, and animal hides such as lambskin rugs. The caterpillars measure up to 13 mm (0.5 inch) long. The caterpillars create tubular silken bags from their food source and carry them around for protection. This bag often matches the color of their food source, helping them blend in their environment. The adult casemaking clothes moths are very small, yellowish to slightly gold-colored moths with narrow, slightly pointed wings. They are not attracted to lights and usually hide when disturbed.

Only the caterpillars, not the adult moths, damage woolen fabrics and similar materials such as animal hides or taxidermy mounts. Because the caterpillars feed underneath wool rugs, they can feed for long periods of time and cause serious damage before they are noticed. The larvae clip the fibers at the base of the material, leaving the item threadbare. Clumps of hair may detach from the hide on taxidermy mounts, leaving them “moth eaten.” Damage is more likely to occur on items that are not frequently used or cleaned on a regular basis.

Moths can be controlled by cleaning, trapping, dry ice fumigation, storage, and freezing/heating. For more information on these moths and control methods: call your local Accomack or Northampton County Extension Office. Here on the Shore call either 678-7946 or 787-1361

[https://www.pubs.ext.vt.edu/3104/3104-1576/3104-1576.html](https://www.pubs.ext.vt.edu/3104/3104-1576/3104-1576.html?fbclid=IwAR37dGJbH6ER9XJcYAzGRpwIX9sUJ_9gKMNu3ocoZYnDfGVD0GBdmZJk_hQ)