

BOOKLICE IN BRITISH COLUMBIA HOMES

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Within recent years three instances have come to my attention of outbreaks of Book-lice (Family Atropidae) in homes in British Columbia. Since two of these infestations had the same origin and since all three were of economic importance, it seems worth while to record them.

The first infestation occurred in 1926 when an outbreak of book-lice was reported in a house in Shaughnessy Heights, the fashionable residential section of Vancouver. The occupants of the home were distracted; one woman was hysterical. Inspection showed a very large house, scrupulously clean from cement basement floor to attic roof, with no visible material in which the book-lice could possibly breed. The house was inspected in minutest detail without accounting for the source of the insects, which could fairly readily be seen in all the rooms, on every article of furniture, in every clothes closet, between the sheets and on my lady's dresses on their hangers. They seemed to be thinly and evenly distributed about the house, and the only source discovered in any room was the baseboard behind which they ran for cover. Recommendations for control were puzzling since there was no definite source discernible. However, sodium fluoride was recommended to be applied as a fine dust around the periphery of every room. Enquiry two weeks later showed that the infestation was reduced to a point where the lice were inconspicuous.

The breeding ground of the Atropidae in this house was accidentally discovered shortly afterwards by carpenters engaged in replacing the draining board of the kitchen sink. Under the board and all around the sink were teeming hordes of book-lice which were immediately done to death in a variety of harsh ways. The infestation seemed to extend some distance up into the wall so the plaster was torn down from two sides of the kitchen and upon the entire area being renovated the whole infestation died out completely.

I am at a loss to account for the beginning of this swarm, or as to how they came to flourish under the draining board unless the insects were brought in originally in the fibre padding which is placed under the floor boards.

The second outbreak occurred in Victoria in 1928 in a newly built residence. Furniture purchased in February of that year revealed patches of mohair falling out during August, but no visible presence of marauders was apparent until a white linen cloth laid over the davenport became swarming with tiny insects. Specimens sent to the University were undoubtedly Atropids while those examined by an official of the museum in Victoria and also by an experienced upholsterer were reported as Buffalo "moths". It seems quite certain that these latter were causing the damage, while Atropids, already present, were breeding in vast numbers in the padding with which the furniture was upholstered. When food supply became scarce they began to spread through the house in a manner which caused much concern and anxiety to the inhabitants. The furniture was fumigated with carbon-bisulphide, but was so damaged that the dealers replaced it without further cost.

The third outbreak occurred in the autumn of 1931 in a recently built home in Point Grey (Vancouver). The identity of the insects had been grossly mistaken and their introduction had been attributed to a poor

youth to whom the lady had given a meal; for, shortly after this kind deed it was noted that numbers of tiny insects were swarming about, particularly in the proximity of the davenport and chairs. Personal inspection showed no sign of the insects on the floors since the room had been thoroughly scoured, and barriers of paradichlorobenzene laid down to prevent their spread. However, on the underside of the davenport and chairs and particularly beneath the tapestry were tremendous numbers of Atropids. Since a careful inspection of other parts of the residence revealed no traces of the pests it is concluded that the furniture (which must have been more or less stocked with them before leaving the storehouse) was the source of infestation and that they increased extensively until the food supply was depleted and then necessity forced them to migrate.

From these three instances noted we may conclude that while an infestation of book-lice may arise by breeding in damp and concealed parts of a building itself, it is more likely that they originate from furniture which has not been adequately sterilized before leaving the factory or warehouse.

Acknowledgment.

I am indebted to Professor G. J. Spencer for details of the first outbreak mentioned and for the opportunity to work on the third one.

A LIST OF THE ANTS OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

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In the Proceedings of the Entomological Society of British Columbia, No. 24, for 1927, the writer published an annotated list of twenty-nine ants which had been recorded from British Columbia prior to 1928.

Since that time and up to December 31st, 1931, collections from 150 nests in British Columbia have been determined and twenty-six new records established.

In the following list all the material was collected by the writer unless otherwise stated.

The writer is indebted to Mr. R. M. Smith, Prof. W. M. Wheeler and Dr. Mann for the identification of material.

Order **HYMENOPTERA**
 Superfamily **FORMICOIDEA**
 Family **FORMICIDAE**
 Subfamily **MYRMECINAE**
 Genus **SOLENOPTIS** Fabricius

- (1) **Solenopsis molesta** Say:—Osoyoos, April 24th, 1925.
 Genus **PHEIDOLE** Westwood
- (2) **Pheidole oregonica** Emery:—Osoyoos, April 23rd, 1925.
 Genus **STENAMMA** Westwood
- (3) **Stenamma nearcticum** Mayr:—Recorded from British Columbia
 by Prof. W. M. Wheeler.
 Genus **APHAENOGASTER** Mayr