

Preservation Newsletter—August 2018

### **These are the Creatures in Your Neighborhood, pt. 2**

Ah, summer in the city-- We emerge from our winter hibernation, shake off the cold weather, and get ready for some fun in the sun!

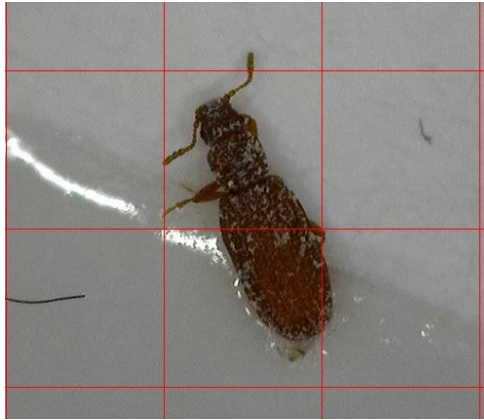
You know who else gets a surge of renewal with the warm, humid air?—yes, our insect neighbors are also becoming more active, enjoying the wider range of food sources available at the market, and getting busy with the baby-making.

Let's explore the majesty of the circle of life as it plays out at the Center for Jewish History:

Insects are unable to regulate their own temperature; body functions, development, and reproduction are more rapid at higher temperatures and slow down or eventually cease at low temperatures. With the higher temperatures both inside and outside our building, we can expect to see more larvae and nymphs among the adults in our sticky traps. We also need to be extra vigilant about monitoring our collections materials, not just our floors: it is in the larval stage that insects tend to do the most damage.



This carpet beetle larva, for instance, requires food of animal origin for growth and development and will eat wool, skin, and dead insects. On the other hand, the adult carpet beetle eats very little, and has a preference for pollen and nectar.

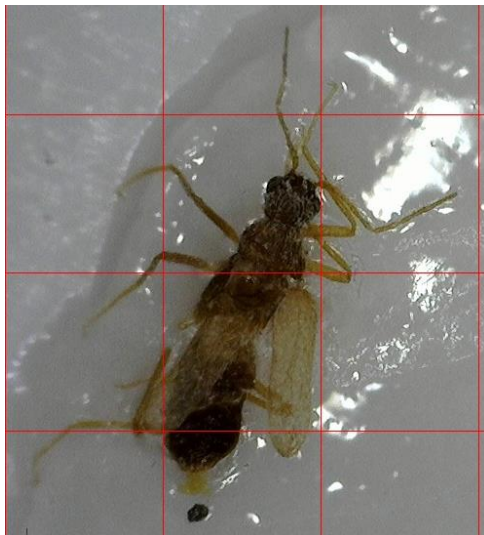


This adult powder post beetle was active as a teenager! The fine dust that covers it indicates that it created a larval tunnel through a wooden object. Larvae can only change into their adult form in higher temperatures. These insects infest new wood; old wood is lower in the starches and sugars it prefers to snack on (I'm sure we can all relate...).

Here's a little odd beetle larva:



She must resemble her mum, because her dad looks like this:



The odd beetle (in all its life stages) mainly dines on other dead bugs, of which we have an abundance in the summer.

In general, a slight uptick (no pun intended!) in insect activity is to be expected in the summer. We are surrounded by urban insects and they are bound to blunder into the Center, even into our stack areas, from time to time. So long as we keep the dust level under control and maintain a watchful eye, we can live in icky harmony with nature's creatures.

Finally, I will share with you one thing I learned while doing this quarter's integrated pest management monitoring: adult book lice have wings. They can fly (shudder).

*The Werner J. and Gisella Levi Cahnman Preservation Laboratory*