

# Stored grain pests identification



**GRDC**

Grains  
Research &  
Development  
Corporation

# THE BACK POCKET GUIDE

# USING THIS GUIDE

This identification guide provides a snapshot of common pests found in stored grain in Australia.

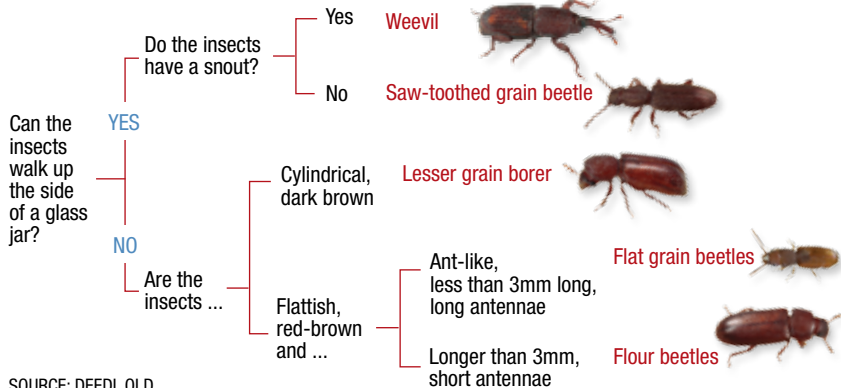
The tolerance for live storage pests in grain sold off-farm either for the domestic, human-consumption market or for the export market is nil.

With more grain being stored on-farm growers need to identify pests early and monitor – at the very least – monthly.

Regular inspection by sieving grain from the top and bottom of silos will provide an early warning of insects present.

## IDENTIFICATION OF COMMON PESTS OF STORED GRAIN

The following flow chart provides a useful guide for grain pest identification.



SOURCE: DEEDI, QLD



PHOTO: DEEDI, QLD

## Lesser Grain Borer

**A serious pest of most stored grains: the Lesser Grain Borer has developed resistance to a number of grain insecticides.**

### **KEY FEATURES:**

- Dark brown cylindrical shaped beetle (up to 3mm long) with club-like antennae
- Viewed from the side the beetle's mouth parts and eyes are tucked underneath the thorax (chest)
- Adult beetles are strong flyers.

### **LIFE CYCLE:**

- Life cycle completed in four weeks at 35°C and seven weeks at 22°C. Breeding stops below 18°C
- Females lay between 200 – 400 eggs on grain surface. Young larvae (white with brown heads) initially feed outside then bore into the grain
- Adults live for 2 – 3 months.

### **DETECTION:**

- Their habit is to remain hidden in grain. Regular sampling and sieving is required for detection.

**Lesser Grain Borer (*Rhyzopertha dominica*)**



PHOTO: DEEDI, QLD

# Rust-Red Flour Beetle

Commonly found in stored cereal grain, processed grain products, oilseeds, nuts and dried fruit.

## KEY FEATURES:

- Adult beetles (3 – 4.5mm long) bright reddish-brown in colour when young and a darker brown when older
- Three larger segments on end of end of antennae
- Similar species: *Tribolium confusum* – confused flour beetle, more common in cool, temperate regions.

## LIFE CYCLE:

- Life cycle completed in 4 weeks at 30°C, 11 weeks at 22°C and reproduction stops below 20°C
- Adults live from 200 days to 2 years and fly in warm conditions
- Up to 1000 eggs per female, loosely scattered throughout the commodity
- Cream-coloured larvae feed externally on damaged grain
- Beetles infest whole grain, but breed more successfully on processed products (i.e. flour).

## DETECTION:

- Beetles move quickly and are strong flyers. When in low numbers use sieving and probe traps to detect
- Preferred habit is around storage areas with poor hygiene, broken grain, gradings or bulk cottonseed.

**Rust-Red Flour Beetle (*Tribolium castaneum*)**



PHOTO: DEEDI, QLD

# Rice Weevil

**Major pest of whole cereal grains.**

## **KEY FEATURES:**

- Adults are dark brownish black (2 – 4mm long) with a long weevil 'snout'
- Have four small light coloured patches on its rear wing covers
- Rarely flies, but climbs vertical surfaces (e.g. glass jar)
- Similar species: *Sitophilus zeamais* – maize weevil, and *Sitophilus granarius* – granary weevil.

## **LIFE CYCLE:**

- Adults live 2-3 months
- Larvae generally not seen – they feed and develop inside single grains
- Life cycle completed in four weeks at 30°C, 15 weeks at 18°C, breeding stops below 15°C.

## **DETECTION:**

- Under warm conditions or when grain is moved rice weevils are often observed climbing out of grain up vertical surfaces. Sieving & probe traps recommended to detect low numbers.

**Rice Weevil (*Sitophilus oryzae*)**



PHOTO: DEEDI, QLD

# Flat Grain Beetle

**Infests most stored grain and feeds on damaged grain. Some populations have high levels of phosphine resistance.**

## **KEY FEATURES:**

- Smaller than other major stored grain pests (2mm long), very flat, reddish brown colour with long thin antennae
- Fast moving, seeking cover under grain or trash
- Adults fly readily and can live for several months
- *C. ferrugineus* most common in Australia, but there are several closely related *Cryptolestes* species with similar appearance.

## **LIFE CYCLE:**

- Life cycle completed in 4 weeks at 30 – 35°C with moist conditions, 13 weeks at 20°C, breeding stops at 17.5°C
- Larvae, with characteristic tail and horns, feed and develop externally on damaged grains
- Females lay up to 300 eggs loosely in the grain stack.

## **DETECTION:**

- Sieving and probe traps usually required for detection
- Some populations of flat grain beetles have developed very high levels of phosphine resistance. Send in insect samples for testing after a fumigation failure.

**Flat Grain Beetle (*Cryptolestes spp*)**



PHOTO: DEEDI, QLD

## Saw-Toothed Grain Beetle

**Infests cereal grains, oilseeds, processed products, peanuts and dried fruits.**

### **KEY FEATURES:**

- Dark brown-black beetle (up to 3mm long), fast moving
- Thorax (chest) has saw-toothed pattern on each side and three distinct ridge lines on top
- Adults climb vertical surfaces (glass jar) and fly in warm conditions.

### **LIFE CYCLE:**

- Prefers damaged or processed grain to establish in significant numbers
- Adults can live for several months, females laying 300 – 400 eggs loosely throughout the grain. White larvae feed and develop externally
- Life cycle completed in 3 weeks at 30 – 33°C, 17 weeks at 20°C, reproduction stops below 17.5°C.

### **DETECTION:**

- Sieving and probe traps are recommended for detection
- Has developed resistance to a number of grain insecticides.

**Saw-Toothed Grain Beetle (*Oryzaephilus surinamensis*)**



PHOTO: DEEDI, QLD

## Psocids – Booklice

**Infests a wide range of grains, commodities and storage facilities.**

### **KEY FEATURES:**

- Very small, soft-bodied and opaque, pale coloured (up to 1 mm long), often appear as a 'moving carpet of dust' on grain or storage structures
- A secondary pest, feeding on damaged grain and moulds
- There are three main species of psocids in Australia, often in mixed populations.

### **LIFE CYCLE:**

- Thrive under warm, moist conditions – optimum 25°C and 75% relative humidity. Life cycle 21 days
- Eggs are laid on grain surface, hatching to nymphs that moult through to adult stage.

### **DETECTION:**

- Warm, humid conditions increases activity. Usually observed in storage or on grain surfaces. Sample and sieve to detect when in low numbers.

**Psocids – Booklice (*Liposcelis spp.*)**





## Bruchids: Cowpea weevils

***Callosobruchus spp* are pests of most pulse crops, including mungbeans, cowpeas, field peas, chickpeas, soybeans and lentils.**

### KEY FEATURES:

- Adults (up to 4mm long), emerge through perfectly round holes in the seed
- Globular, tear-shaped body is reddish brown with black and grey markings
- Wing covers (elytra) do not fully cover the abdomen
- Adults have long antennae, climb vertical surfaces (glass jar) and are strong flyers.

### LIFE CYCLE:

- Adults do not feed, but lay 100 white eggs clearly visible on the outside of seed. Adult short lifespan 10 –12 days. Unlike most storage pests, adults may also lay eggs on mature seed pods in a standing crop
- Larvae feed and develop within individual seeds and emerge as adults leaving a neat round hole.

### DETECTION:

- A common problem in warmer months for mungbeans. Fortnightly thorough sampling and sieving is important to prevent serious losses.

**Bruchids: Cowpea weevils (*Callosobruchus species*)**



PHOTO: SARDI ENTOMOLOGY

## Pea Weevil

**Both a field pest and storage pest (appears in storage after emergence). In WA it is a major pest of field peas.**

### KEY FEATURES:

- Adult globular body length (4 – 5mm long) with long legs and antennae
- Wings (elytra) are patterned with white/cream spots
- Do not breed in stored dry peas, adults lay and glue eggs onto pods in standing pea crops before harvest
- Adult emerges through a neat round hole in the seed
- Adults are strong flyers, they reappear in spring to visit flowers to feed on the nectar then seek out new field peas crops to lay eggs.

### LIFE CYCLE:

- Hatching larvae bore through the seed pod and into a single seed where they feed, grow and pupate
- Breed one generation per year. Adult is long-lived and overwinters but does not feed on field peas.

### DETECTION:

- Adults migrate into crops from seed sources and nearby trees where they shelter under the bark
- Field peas should be regularly checked, in and around the crop edges when first pods are forming using a sweep net when temperatures are above 18°C
- Check pea seed for neat round holes (evidence that adults have emerged).

**Pea Weevil (*Bruchus pisorum*)**



## Moths: Angoumois Grain Moth

A pest of whole cereal grains which only infests surface layers of bulk-stored grains. Infestation of standing maize crops before harvest is quite common, occasionally in other cereal crops.

### KEY FEATURES:

- Silvery grey to grey brown wings which taper to a point
- Wings have a long fringe of fine hairs along the posterior edge
- Adults (5 – 7mm long) are unable to penetrate grain, therefore only infest surface layers of bulk grain.

### LIFE CYCLE:

- Adult moths do not feed but lay 150 – 300 eggs on or near the grain surface. This pest does not create webbing
- Larvae burrow into a single grain and feed and develop until the adult moth emerges in 10 – 14 days through a visible hole
- Life cycle takes around 5 – 7 weeks in warm conditions.

### DETECTION:

- Take regular monthly samples and look for moths near grain surface. When adults emerge pupal cases are often found protruding from grain.

Angoumois Grain Moth (*Sitotroga cerealella*)



# Indian Meal Moth

**A pest in flour mills, processing plants, dried fruit and on the surface of all types of grains.**

## **KEY FEATURES:**

- Adults (5 – 7mm long), distinctive bicoloured wings – dark reddish brown on rear half of the wing and grey at the front.

## **LIFE CYCLE:**

- Female moth lay 200 – 400 eggs on the foodstuff
- Larvae create webbing as they feed. They then pupate in several grains webbed together in a clump
- In summer life cycle takes about 4 weeks.

## **DETECTION:**

- Take regular monthly samples and look for webbing and moths near grain surface
- Also check in residues on grain harvesting and handling equipment.

**Indian Meal Moth larvae (*Plodia interpunctella*)**



## Warehouse Moths

**A pest of flour mills, food processing plants, cereal grains and oilseeds.**

### **KEY FEATURES:**

- Adult moth body length is 8 – 10mm
- Moth has grey wings with many fine, dark wavy markings, including lighter stripes extending horizontally across each forewing
- Extensive webbing created by larvae is visible on the grain surface.

### **LIFE CYCLE:**

- Adult moths do not feed and are short-lived. Female lays between 100 – 270 eggs over a two week period on or near grain
- Caterpillar is coloured light pink with a small black spot at the base of each hair
- Full life cycle 30 days under ideal conditions, 30°C and 75% relative humidity.

### **DETECTION:**

- Take regular monthly samples and look for webbing and moths near grain surface. All moths are typically active at dusk and dawn.

**Warehouse Moths larva (*Ephestia species*)**



## Phosphine-Resistant Insects

- **Saw-Toothed Grain Beetle and Lesser Grain Borer** have developed some resistance to a number of grain insecticides.
- **Flat Grain Beetle:** some populations have developed high level of phosphine resistance.
- A range of stored grain insects are becoming harder to kill with phosphine fumigations.
- Threatens exports, as phosphine may become ineffective against some pests.
- Poor fumigation practices increase resistance (e.g. repeated fumigations in poorly sealed storages).
- Strong phosphine resistance is also found in overseas countries.
- Live insects detected following fumigation should be tested for resistance.
- Resistant insects can fly between stores or be transported in machinery.

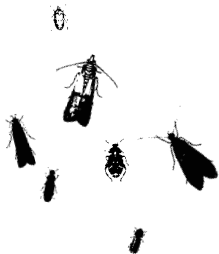
# EXOTIC PESTS

Not present in Australia.

## BE ON THE LOOKOUT

**The following pests have serious potential impact on the value of grain if detected in Australia.**

**If you see anything unusual, report it to your local state department of primary industries or phone the Exotic Plant Pest Hotline, 1800 084 881**



## Karnal bunt

(*Tilletia indica*)

- Can infect wheat, durum and triticale.
- Usually only part of each grain is affected. Infected stored grain will have a sooty appearance and will crush easily, leaving a black powder.
- Infected grain often has a rotten fish smell, flour quality is seriously reduced.
- Symptoms are similar to common bunt.



PHOTO: PADIL

## Khapra beetle

(*Trogoderma variabile*)

- Attacks most stored grains.
- Larvae are covered in fine hairs.
- Looks identical to the warehouse beetle to the naked eye.
- Causes grain loss in storage.
- Larvae skins contaminate grain and cause allergies on consumption.
- Phosphine fumigation is not reliably effective.



PHOTO: USDA



PHOTO: KONDININ GROUP

## How to monitor and identify grain pests

- Identify pests early by regular fortnightly/monthly sampling.
- Sieve (with 2mm mesh) grain samples taken from the top and bottom of stores onto a white tray. Hold tray out in sunlight to warm for 10 to 20 seconds to encourage insect movement to identify them.
- Also use grain probes or pitfall traps to monitor for insects. These are pushed into the grain surface and then pulled up for fortnightly/monthly inspection. Place 1 or 2 traps in the top of a silo or several traps in a grain shed.
- If live insects are found, identify them and select the appropriate treatment for the grain type and insect. Always check product labels. Ensure potential grain buyers & end-users also accept treatments selected.

Use a 2mm mesh sieve to separate insects from grain





PHOTO: CHRIS NEWMAN, DAFWA

## Control measures

**Hygiene:** Insects thrive in sheltered, warm sites with a food source. Promptly clean out grain residues from empty silos, equipment and harvesters.

**Aeration:** Using aeration reduces grain temperatures and creates uniform, cool conditions in the grain bulk. This maintains grain quality and slows or stops grain pests breeding. Aim for grain temperatures of 20°C in summer and under 15°C in winter. Best aeration results are achieved by using a good quality automatic controller that selects optimum temperature and relative humidity times to run fans.



PHOTO: KONDININ GROUP

**Fumigation:** Ensure a storage is 'well sealed - gas tight' to achieve effective control of all stages of the insect life cycle (eggs, larvae, pupae and adult). Pressure test sealable silos to check for leaks.

**Insect resistance is often developed due to repeated fumigations in poorly sealed storages.**

A whole probe or pitfall cone trap. A probe can often more easily detect pest species in a grain sample than a sieve.

# To check insects for resistance, send samples for testing

## Follow these basic steps:

- Use a small, strong plastic container which is well sealed. DO NOT provide air holes - insects will escape
- Place 20 to 100 insects with clean untreated grain into container.
- Do not overfill the container - leave some air space
- Label container with the date, your name and the silo / storage identification
- Provide all your contact details (address, phone and email) and a brief explanation of why you are seeking a resistance test, the storage type and details of any grain treatments details
- If possible post early in the week so the insects are not left in the mail over the weekend.

**SEND  
INSECTS  
SAMPLES  
TO**

## Send samples to your relevant regional Australian laboratory:

### Northern Region (QLD and northern NSW):

Dr Manoj Nayak  
Plant Science, Agri-Science Queensland / DEEDI  
Ecosciences Precinct  
GPO Box 267  
BRISBANE QLD 4001

E: [manoj.nayak@deedi.qld.gov.au](mailto:manoj.nayak@deedi.qld.gov.au)

### Southern Region (southern NSW, VIC, SA and TAS):

Dr Joanne Holloway  
NSW DPI / Wagga Wagga Agricultural Institute  
Pine Gully Rd  
WAGGA WAGGA NSW 2650

E: [joanne.holloway@industry.nsw.gov.au](mailto:joanne.holloway@industry.nsw.gov.au)

### Western Region (WA):

Michelle Chami  
Department of Agriculture and Food WA  
Grain Insect Resistance Monitoring  
Entomology Bin 31  
Locked Bag 4, Bentley Delivery Centre  
BENTLEY WA 6983

E: [michelle.chami@agric.wa.gov.au](mailto:michelle.chami@agric.wa.gov.au)

**FOR WA BIOSECURITY  
ONLY WA INSECTS TO BE  
SENT TO THIS LAB!**

## Useful resources

**GRDC Grain storage extension project web site:**  
[www.storedgrain.com.au](http://www.storedgrain.com.au)

**Grain Trade Australia:** [www.nacma.com.au](http://www.nacma.com.au)

**Graintec Scientific:** 07 4638 7666  
[www.graintec.com.au](http://www.graintec.com.au)

**Exotic Plant Pest Hotline:** 1800 084 881

## Grain pest identification guides

**Crop Insects: the Ute Guide –  
Southern grainbelt edition**

**Crop Insects: the Ute Guide –  
Northern grainbelt edition**

**Crop Insects: the Ute Guide –  
Western grainbelt edition**

**All ute guides are available from  
Ground Cover Direct, 1800 110 044**



### Grain storage specialists:

**Queensland and northern NSW**  
Philip Burrill, 0427 696 500  
[philip.burrill@deedi.qld.gov.au](mailto:philip.burrill@deedi.qld.gov.au)

**Southern NSW, Victoria, SA  
and Tasmania**  
Peter Botta, 0417 501 890  
[pbotta@bigpond.com](mailto:pbotta@bigpond.com)

**Western Australia:**  
Rob Emery  
08 9368 3247, 0404 819 601  
[rob.emery@agric.wa.gov.au](mailto:rob.emery@agric.wa.gov.au)

### Grain biosecurity contacts:

**South Australia**  
Judy Bellati, 08 8207 7843  
[judy.bellati@sa.gov.au](mailto:judy.bellati@sa.gov.au)

**Victoria and Tasmania**  
Jim Moran, 03 5430 4479  
[jim.moran@dpi.vic.gov.au](mailto:jim.moran@dpi.vic.gov.au)

**Western Australia:**  
Jeff Russell, 08 9690 2000  
[jeff.russell@agric.wa.gov.au](mailto:jeff.russell@agric.wa.gov.au)

**New South Wales**  
Louise Rossiter, 02 6391 3188  
[louise.rossiter@dpi.nsw.gov.au](mailto:louise.rossiter@dpi.nsw.gov.au)

**Queensland**  
Kym McIntyre, 07 4639 8864  
[kym.mcintyre@deedi.qld.gov.au](mailto:kym.mcintyre@deedi.qld.gov.au)

**Plant Health Australia**  
[www.planthealthaustralia.com.au](http://www.planthealthaustralia.com.au)

### Other guides:

*Insects of stored grain: a pocket reference*, ([www.publish.csiro.au](http://www.publish.csiro.au))

*Stored grain pest control guide*, ([www.storedgrain.com.au](http://www.storedgrain.com.au))

**Disclaimer:** Any recommendations, suggestions or opinions contained in this publication do not necessarily represent the policy or views of the Grains Research and Development Corporation (GRDC). No person should act on the basis of the contents of this publication without first obtaining specific, independent professional advice. The Corporation and contributors to this Back Pocket Guide may identify products by proprietary or trade names to help readers identify particular types of products. We do not endorse or recommend the products of any manufacturer referred to. Other products may perform as well as or better than those specifically referred to. The GRDC will not be liable for any loss, damage, cost or expense incurred or arising by reason of any person using or relying on the information in this publication. will not be liable for any loss, damage, cost or expense incurred or arising by reason of any person using or relying on the information in this publication.

**Caution: Research on unregistered pesticide use** Any research with unregistered pesticides or of unregistered products reported in this document does not constitute a recommendation for that particular use by the authors or the authors' organisations. All pesticide applications must accord with the currently registered label for that particular pesticide, crop, pest and region.

**Copyright:** © All material published in *The Back Pocket Guide* is copyright protected and may not be reproduced in any form without written permission from the GRDC.

**November 2011**

**GRDC**

**Grains  
Research &  
Development  
Corporation**



The Stored Grain Pests Identification Back Pocket Guide is part of a series of Back Pocket Guides published by the GRDC.

Photos courtesy Queensland Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation (DEEDI) unless otherwise specified.

**Maureen Cribb,**  
**GRDC Publishing Manager**  
**T: 02 6166 4500 E: m.cribb@grdc.com.au**

**GROUND COVER DIRECT** How to order

**Free phone 1800 11 00 44 Free fax 1800 00 99 88**

**Email [ground-cover-direct@canprint.com.au](mailto:ground-cover-direct@canprint.com.au)**

**Post Ground Cover Direct, PO Box 7456, Canberra MC ACT 2610**

**For a complete listing of all GRDC publications, go to [www.grdc.com.au/bookshop](http://www.grdc.com.au/bookshop)**

**Production and design by Coretext**  
**T: 03 9670 1168 [www.coretext.com.au](http://www.coretext.com.au)**

**coretext**

