

Bedbugs

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The bedbug, *Cimex lectularius* (Fig. 1), attacks man, bats, chickens and occasionally other animals. As an ectoparasite, the bedbug has probably plagued man since primitive times. Two other species that attack man are the bat bug, *C. pilosellus*, and the swallow bug, *Oeciacus vicarius*. The swallow bug shows up in our Puyallup Plant Clinic more than any other species of "bedbug". The frequency of swallows nesting under the eaves of houses probably contributes to these findings.

The bedbug, *C. lectularius*, probably comes into homes as hitchhikers on previously used items, such as mattresses, bed frames, and possibly other home articles. While many people associate bedbugs with poor hygiene and housecleaning, such conditions do not have to exist for infestations to occur. Bedbugs are rarely seen because they are night stalkers with an initial painless bite. Bites ordinarily produce raised lumps or swellings but no red spots or other distinguishing characteristic as those produced by fleas, etc.

Bedbugs are slightly smaller than ¼ inch long, rather round or suboval, and are rusty red to mahogany in color- becoming redder after feeding. They are quite flat until they've fed.

If bedbugs are definitely determined to be in a home, it is advisable to hire the services of a reputable PCO (Pest Control Operator).



Fig. 1. The common bed bug.
By K. Grey.

Reference:

Borror, D.J. and D.M. DeLong. An introduction to the study to the study of insects. Third Ed. Holt Rinehart Winston Inc. 1971. 812 pp.