

***Trogoderma granarium*, the Khapra beetle (Dermestidae)**

This is the most dreaded among the stored product insects. The insect breeds preferably on cereals but can develop on oilseeds and flours of green gram, cowpea, pigeonpea and bengalgram. Khapra beetle infestation is very slow to establish but difficult to eradicate once established. Adults are small black or light brown beetles, 1.8 to 3 mm long. Antenna has a distinct club consisting of 3-5 segments.

Adults do not fly, short-living and non-feeding. Larvae are yellowish-brown growing up to 6 mm. They are provided with hairs (hastisetæ) which enable them to be transported to different places.

Eggs (63 eggs/female) are laid on the grain. Under normal circumstances a shorter larval period of 15 days at 35°C and 73% RH. has been reported. However larval development is prolonged when it enters into diapause. Pupation occurs on the top layer of the food material. Life cycle completed in 25 days under optimum conditions of 33–37°C, 45–75% RH.

Khapra beetle multiplies faster under hot and dry conditions. Khapra larvae under unfavorable conditions enter diapause hiding in cracks and crevices of the stores that are inaccessible to insecticidal sprays. They remain without pupating for a long period (up to 8 years in extreme cases). Even under normal conditions of temperature and adequate food supply, a reservoir of diapausing larvae is maintained. The cryptic nature and extreme persistence due to diapause have enhanced the pest status of the species.

