

Pest Profile



Photo credit: Jim Kalisch, University of Nebraska--Lincoln

Common Name: Indian Meal Moth

Scientific Name: *Plodia interpunctella* (Hubner)

Order and Family: Lepitopetra: Pyralidae

Size and Appearance: *Plodia interpunctella* (Hubner) is 16-20 mm in length with wings spread and has a reddish-brown coloration. The wing color of the moth is gray and has a copper luster, which aids in distinguishing it between other stored food lepidopteran pests. Larvae are 9-19 mm in length and take on a hue similar to food they are currently consuming, ranging from pink to brown.

	Length (mm)	Appearance
Egg	< 0.001 mm	Eggs are extremely small and difficult to see. Females lay about 100-400 at a time on a food source.
Larva/Nymph	9-19 mm, depending on instar	Larvae go through 3 instars in roughly a 3-week period. They have 5 pairs of pro-legs and often take on the coloration of their food source.
Adult	16-20 mm	Adults are brown with gray wings. The wings feature a copper hue, which is helpful in identification.
Pupa (if applicable)	15-17 mm	Unlike similar species, pupal stage does not occur within infested grain. Pupal case is light brown in color and covered by a thin layer of webbing and debris.

Type of feeder (Chewing, sucking, etc.): Chewing

Host/s or Prey: *Plodia interpunctella* are stored product pests that consume a wide variety of foodstuffs including grains, seeds, dried fruit, powdered dairy, chocolate candies, and dry dog food.

Description of Damage (larvae and adults): The larvae are the damaging stage and their feeding reduces the dry weight of the product. The larvae further reduce value by leaving droppings and webbing in the grain. Presence in the grain can mean dockage for those individuals trying to sell it.

References:

Smith, E.H. and Whitman, R.C. (2007). Stored Product Pests- Indian Meal Moth. In *NPMA Field Guide of Structural Pests*. (9.22.1). National Pest Management Association International.

Rutschky, C.W., Calvin, D. (1999). Indian Meal Moth. Penn State College of Agricultural Sciences, Department of Entomology. Retrieved on July 8th, 2016 from <http://ento.psu.edu/extension/factsheets/indian-meal-moth>