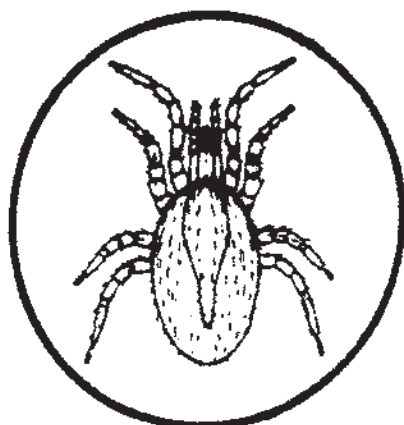


-BULLETIN-

Vector Control Branch

NO. 7

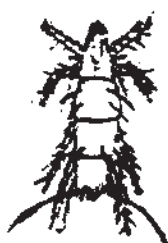


ITCH MITES

Mites are not insects. They are related to spiders and scorpions. Most mites that bite are parasites that feed on the blood of rats, birds, or insects. These mites bite people only when they are starving because of the absence of their normal hosts. Other non-parasitic mites may cause severe rashes when people handle infested food-stuff. Reactions to mite bites are often delayed because it is an allergic reaction and not one caused by the bite itself. This delayed reaction causes difficulties in finding the source of infestation because the victim often leaves the infested area before noticing the bite.



BIRD MITE



STRAW ITCH MITE

GROCER'S ITCH
MITE

SCABIES MITE

MITE IDENTIFICATION

With the exception of bird mites, most mites are too small to be seen without a microscope. Mites are identified by collecting dust samples with a vacuum cleaner and examining them under a microscope. Mites visible to the eye or felt crawling on the skin can be collected for identification by tacking them on to a piece of transparent tape.

MAJOR PEST SPECIES

- 1. Bird Mites.** Bird mite problems usually occur after nestling birds in ceilings, eaves, or trees leave their nests. Mites left behind without a host to feed on migrate from the nests in large numbers and tend to bite any warm-blooded animal they encounter. Bird mites are usually not windblown. They are large enough to be seen crawling on walls.
- 2. Rat Mites.** Rat mites usually begin biting people after successful rodent eradication in heavily infested buildings. Like bird mites, they usually do not bite people unless they are left without their normal host to feed upon.
- 3. Straw Itch Mite.** Straw itch mites are parasites that feed on beetle larvae that infest bean pods such as haole koa, monkey pods, etc. Complaints usually occur when bean pods open and the mites are windblown onto people nearby. Homes with beetle infested beans or cereals in cupboards often have problems with this mite. Bites cause severe irritation.
- 4. Grain Itch Mite.** Improperly packaged or stored food, particularly cereal products, often become infested with mites after long storage. Some of these mites cause severe skin rashes when infested materials are handled. Mite infestation should be suspected whenever stored food products are covered with a fine powder.

5. Scabies Mite. Diagnosis and treatment of scabies must be done by a physician. Scabies are mites that tunnel beneath the skin and cause irritation. Transmission is primarily by body contact with an infested person. Scabies should be suspected when body rashes occur without any evidence of mite infestation on the premises. Itching tends to increase when sleeping under covers in bed.

CONTROL METHODS

Permanent Control

The most effective control method is to remove the source of infestation. Removal of bird nests, rat nests, infested foodstuff, and pod-bearing trees result in permanent control.

Temporary Control

Use an aerosol insecticide labeled for use against mites to obtain immediate relief. Apply spray in infested bird or rat nest before removal.

CAUTION: *Certain pesticides and their solvents may cause respiratory irritation. Persons with respiratory diseases should consult their physicians before using any pesticide. IT IS A VIOLATION OF FEDERAL LAW IF PESTICIDES ARE NOT APPLIED EXACTLY AS THE LABEL DIRECTS.*

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Printed by
Health Promotion and Education Branch
Hawaii State Department of Health
John C. Lewin, M.D., Director of Health
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Revised 6/90 5M

878-3560