



Bed-Bugs.co.uk

Useful information and professional treatment solutions.

Preface – From time to time we are called upon to identify unknown pests or to investigate a suspected case of bed bugs. On a number of occasions the pest responsible turned out to be bird mites. These may be found in low numbers but in extreme cases can swarm in thousands. They are an extremely difficult pest to contain once in a property. Identification of the source of the problem and professional treatment will quickly resolve the issue but access to the infestation site often require specialist equipment and training which you are more likely to get through a pest controller who specialises in bird proofing work.

Bird Mites

Bird mites are another parasitic insect which seem to be on the increase. They can crop up in properties where birds have been nesting but are no longer present. They are small mites which get carried to the roosting area and occupy the nesting area. If birds are not present they may ingress into a property to seek food.

External and internal examination of the property will often identify the nesting location which must be removed and all the affected areas treated. They leave no trace signs such as the bed bug associated faecal traces and may be difficult to identify. They are usually closely associated with the nesting area but have been known to travel significant distances between nesting and feeding locations.

The associated bites may look similar to bed bugs and as with bed bugs the degree of bite response is affected by your own immune response and environment. Anyone who claims to be able to identify an insect from its bite other than fleas which have a characteristic red dot in the centre is not taking an accurate scientific approach to identifying your problem.

Once inside a property bird mites are often found at the ceiling junctions and around windows. They react to changes in temperature and carbon dioxide and will often use these as a signal for when a host is present.

They are frequently a lot smaller than bed bugs / bat bugs or bird bugs and may appear to be mobile black dots. They are not related to bed bugs and fall into the taxonomic classification of mites as opposed to bugs.. The pictures below were taken on a case where the bathroom window was the ingress point and the nest was some 7 - 10 metres away on some poorly maintained guttering which was the site of waste building up and a

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birds nest. To indicate size the height of this part of the window frame was about 3 inches, a standard sized for Victorian sash frames.

The problem was resolved by the removal of the nesting material and application of the appropriate professional grade insecticide products and barrier tape for immediate relief.

If you suspect bird mites in your property do not move any furniture or items in or out of the affected area and be prepared to under go a detailed and thorough inspection to identify and deal with the source of the problem as well as the insects themselves. Control of bird mite ingress requires investigational skills more importantly than the type of chemical products you use. We would advise against the use of any domestic chemical products because may repel the insects rather than eradicate the colony which is what is ultimately required for a long term solution.

When selecting a pest control professional make sure they are experienced at identifying and working with unknown pests, as for what will be done in terms of treatment they are more likely to be focused on first identifying exactly what the problem is.

Caution: Live samples should not be caught; they have an extreme ability to escape from captivity and unlike many insects will easily climb smooth surfaces, to capture samples for identification use tape to gently immobilise onto card.



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Links

www.BIRDMITES.ORG Bird mite resource website

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