

## **Pantry Pests**

Packaged foods are very attractive to many pantry pests. These unwelcome guests can even be found in a home that is spotless. They can crawl through cracks, fly through open windows or enter the home by hiding in a bag of groceries.

Pantry insects can infest many different kinds of dry food products, such as flour based products, cornmeal, cereal, rice, spaghetti, macaroni, dried fruits, nuts, candy, dry pet food, and spices. They also like birdseed, pasta, cake mixes, granola, and dried flower arrangements.

Stored product insects multiply in the food they infest or in drawers, cracks and crevices in cupboards, or other places where food debris accumulates. These pests will multiply fast. You may see them in great numbers. They can penetrate paper, thin cardboard or cellophane packages. Containers made of glass, metal, or heavy plastic with tight fitting lids generally can not be penetrated.

## **Getting Rid of Pantry Pests**

Clean well and store food properly to get rid of pests. Throw away any infested product. Do not shake the packages before examining them for insects, since the adult insects normally reside on the surface of cereals and will be harder to find if mixed in with the product. When a container is opened, they will move quickly away from the light. Clean shelves with a mixture of warm water and a mild cleansing agent. Clean cracks and corners well.

Insecticides can be used as a supplement to proper food storage and cleaning, but they will have no effect on the insects in food packages. As long as the food source exists, insecticides will not permanently control pantry pests.

Courtesy of Owl Pest Prevention