



Powder Post Beetles

1. Larva (which actually eats wood)
2. Damage
3. Lyctid Beetle (adult)
4. Anobiid Beetle (adult)

The term “powder post beetle” is a generic term used to describe several small wood-boring beetles which reduce wood to a fine, flour-like powder. The damage is done by the larva (worm) stage as they create narrow tunnels in wood as they feed. Infestations are usually found after noticing small, round “shotholes” in the surface of the wood. The holes are actually exit holes where the adult beetles have chewed out the wood to emerge after completing their development. The adults lay eggs on or below the surface of bare wood. The eggs hatch into tiny larvae which bore into the wood. They may emerge in a year or two or many years later as an adult.

The lyctid beetle is found worldwide and they attack hardwoods and bamboo. This is the beetle often found in a piece of antique furniture. People are often surprised that the “shotholes” have begun appearing in a piece of furniture they have had for many years without noticing any activity. In addition to antique furniture lyctid beetles may be found in hardwood flooring or hardwood trim (such as Philippine mahogany window casing mainly in softwoods, but will also attack hardwoods).

The anobiid beetle is found mainly in softwoods, although it will attack softwoods as well. It is the beetle often found in the softwood substructure in homes (beams, sill plates, joists, studs and subflooring). In addition to antique furniture, lyctid beetles may be found in hardwood flooring or hardwood doors and trim (such as Philippine mahogany window casings). The anobiid beetle is found mainly in softwoods, but will attach hardwoods as well. It is the beetle often found in the softwood substructure in homes (beams, sill plates, joists, studs and subflooring).

Wood that is attacked by powder post beetles usually has a high moisture content. The beetles are usually present in the lumber before it is made into furniture or used in a structure. Proper drying of the lumber often eliminates the beetles. Treatment can range from replacing a wood member to fumigation. One of the problems in determining the extent of future damage is there is little way of knowing how many larva are still inside the wood and have yet caused noticeable damage.

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