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## Sawtoothed grain beetle

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The sawtoothed grain beetle and the closely related Merchant grain beetle are common pests in the kitchen where they infest grains, cereals, pasta, pet food, straw flowers, tea, old rodent bait, candy bars, flour, spices, and other dried plant material such as potpourri. Both are about 1/8 inch long and have 6 saw-like teeth on the segment behind the head.



Sawtoothed grain beetles

These beetles are brought into the home on food items and often spread to other products before the infestation is discovered. The life cycle takes 1-3 months at room temperatures and adults can live for a year or longer. Larvae are small yellowish worms that usually do not leave the food product. The small size allows the beetles to infest most food packaging. Often a number of packages become infested before the insects are discovered.

**Control.** Because this is a food pest the best control is to dispose of infested products. Check all potential products for activity. Un-infested dry goods should be stored in substantial glass or plastic containers with tight fitting lids to prevent access or spreading the infestation. Heating infested products to 140° F for 2-3 hours or freezing at 10° F or less for 48 hours will kill all life stages. You cannot control this pest with insecticides alone. If infested food is not disposed of you will continue to have insects. Numbers should drop within 1-2 weeks of the clean-up. It may help to vacuum cracks and crevices. If beetle numbers remain high 2 weeks after cleanup look for other sources of the problem within the home. If insecticides are used, all food and dishware should be removed before use and products should be dry before replacing items in the cupboard.

*For more information: Contact your County Extension Agent:*