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The Australian Carpet Beetle, *Anthrenocerus australis* (Hope)  
(Coleoptera, Dermestidae-Anthrenini) in the Netherlands

by

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Species of *Anthrenus* are probably doing more damage than is generally assumed. Samples of woollen goods infested by carpet beetle larvae are frequently received for identification at the Vezelinstituut T.N.O. After rearing the beetles the species can easily be identified and that is why we keep a special rearing jar for the purpose. So far the larvae mostly proved to be *Anthrenus scrophulariae* (L.) or *A. verbasci* (L.).

To my surprise, however, several beetles which I identified as *Anthrenocerus australis* (Hope), an Australian representative of the Anthrenini, hatched in the rearing jar a few days ago.

The following description is taken from HINTON ("Beetles Associated with Stored Products", Brit. Mus. Nat. Hist., London 1945) and is supplemented by our own observations.

The beetle (Figs. 1 and 2) is 2.0—3.4 mm long and 1.4—2.1 mm broad, oval in shape and a shining dark brown to black in colour. The antennae

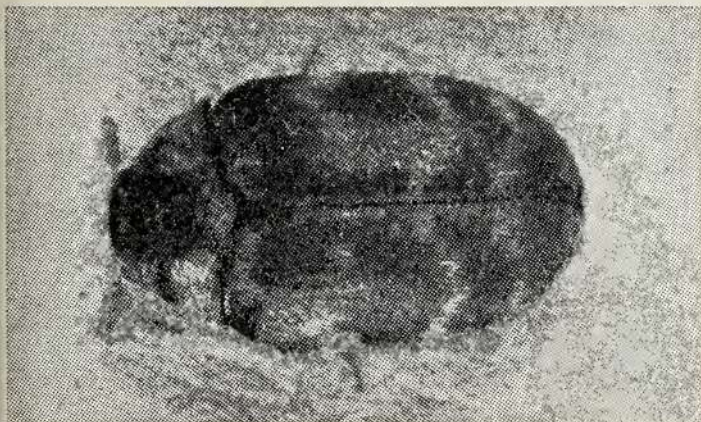


Fig. 1. The Australian Carpet Beetle, *Anthrenocerus australis* (Hope) ( $\times 15$ ), adult beetle obtained from a culture kindly supplied by the Wool Industry Research Association, Leeds.

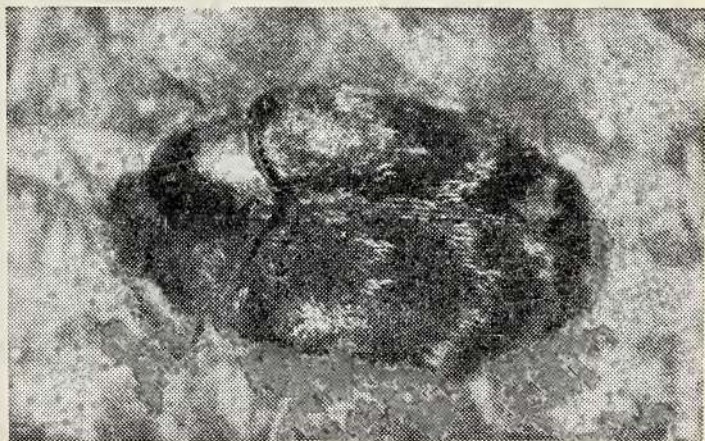


Fig. 2. *Anthrenocerus australis*, adult beetle ( $\times 15$ ) from the Netherlands (probably from Enschede). The hair-like scales are very conspicuous in three white zig-zag bands.

are paler than the body, and the wing cases have three transverse zig-zag bands of whitish scales which are so long and narrow that they appear as hairs. These hair-like scales are a characteristic feature of this species. The adult does not damage wool, its function being to propagate the species as is the case with most other representatives of the Anthrenini. If they feed at all, they do it on flowers (chiefly Umbelliferae).

The newly hatched larva is creamy white in colour and very active in its movements. It grows by casting its skin, becoming darker in colour. The mature larva (fig. 3) is covered with stiff dark hairs (which are so characteristic of all Anthrenini larvae), each segment having a reddish brown to chocolate coloured band on the back whilst the underside of the larva is cream. Pupation takes place in the last larval skin as is usual in the Anthrenini.

The habits of *Anthrenocerus australis* are similar to those of other carpet beetles and the larvae have been recorded as feeding on hides, dried condensed milk, cake crumbs, biscuits and dried insects and, in Australia, on woollen materials in houses. It was introduced into Britain where it was first discovered in 1933 and has since repeatedly been found as a pest in textile mills (see e.g. Wool Ind. Res. Assoc. Bull. 10, No. 5).

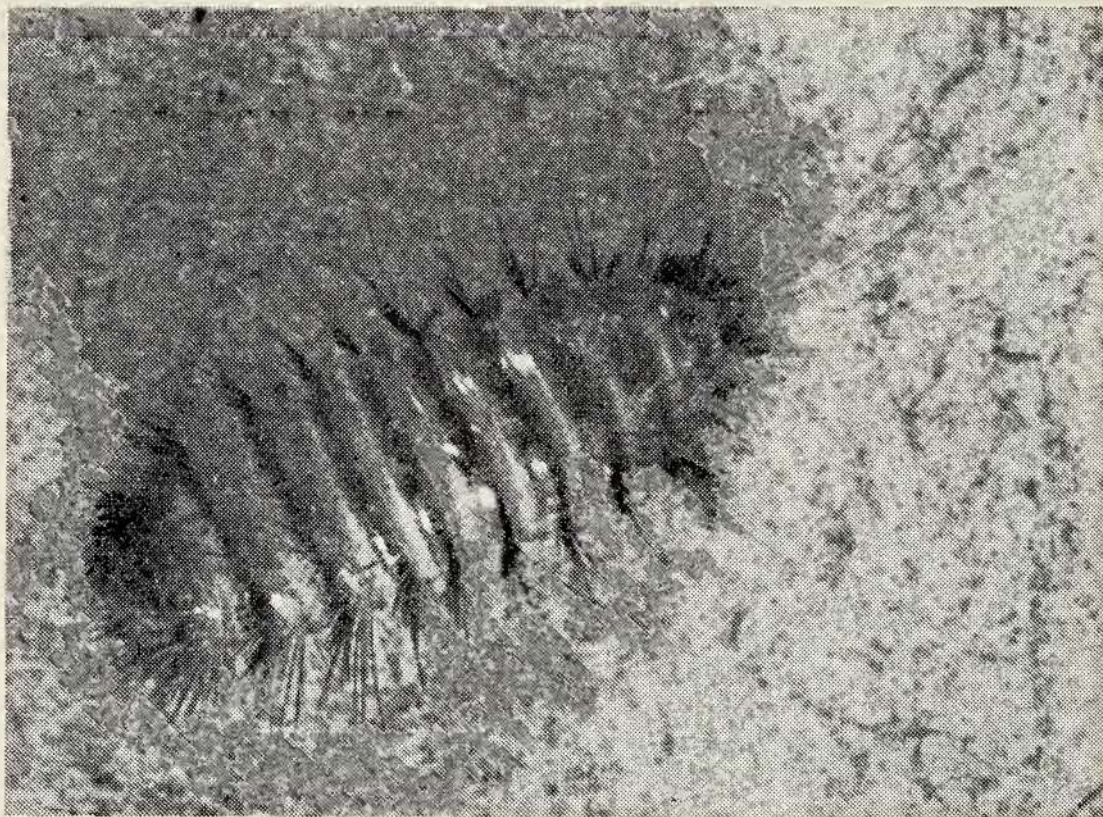


Fig. 3. *Anthrenocerus australis* (Hope), full-grown larva (also from the culture obtained from W.I.R.A.),  $\times 15$ .

Although I am not quite certain where the larvae had come from (because various consignments of larvae are being reared in the same container), it is very likely that we obtained them from a firm at Enschede. The firm in question had received a shipment of woollen warp yarns from England and on arrival at Enschede the lot appeared to be infested. The infestation must have taken place in Britain before shipment to this country. This is probably the first record of this species on the Continent.

It is to be expected that *Anthrenocerus australis* will also appear in other European countries in the near future.

Delft, April 1950.