

# TABS

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## HOW INSECTS DAMAGE CLOTHES

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### WHAT IS THE PROBLEM?

Sometimes, seemingly out of nowhere, mysterious small holes or loss of surface fibers appear on a fabric.

### WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

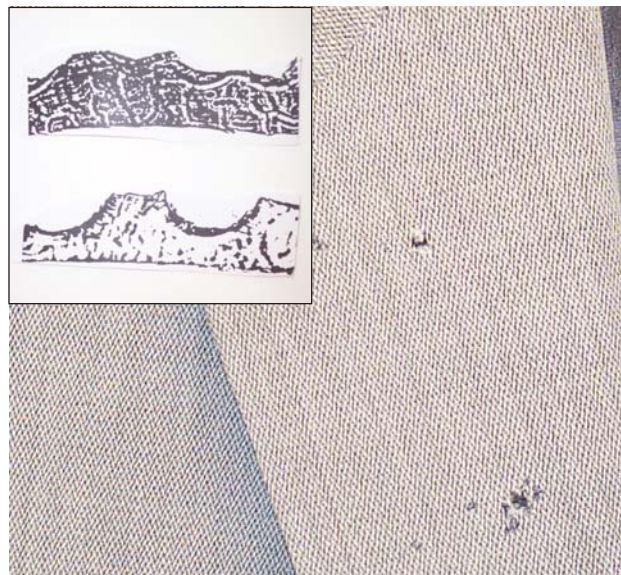
Normally this damage looks like small holes in the fabric. In some instances, however, mainly on soft fabrics with a nap, the fiber damage appears as irregular “trails” or veins across the surface. This damage can appear in just one area or could be in several areas of a garment at random.

### WHAT CAUSED IT?

Bugs. Many insects, such as moths, silverfish, cockroaches, and beetles, are attracted to textiles with food, beverage, and perspiration stains left on them. Insect damage is more common on wool fabrics, since these fibers are made from a protein that particularly attracts moths. Moth damage is actually caused by larvae of the hatched eggs that were laid in the fabric while in storage long before the damage appears. It may show up on just one garment in a closet or affect several garments.

### CAN IT BE PREVENTED?

The best method for preventing insect damage is to frequently inspect and clean dark areas in rooms, closets, and storage containers. Wash and dry clean garments regularly and always clean just before any prolonged storage. If possible, store items in tight containers or sealed garment bags. Closed cedar closets and cedar chests can serve as insect-proof containers, although like cedar chips, mothballs, or crystals, these methods have no guaranteed mothproofing value. In order for any insect protection to be truly effective, the storage container must be tight so that insects cannot get in.



Insects caused the holes on the lapel of this jacket.  
**INSET:** Bite marks from insect attacks on two separate fibers can be seen through a high-powered microscope.

### WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

This type of damage happens over a period of time while the garment is in home storage, so the owner of the garment (through no fault of his own) is ultimately responsible. Insect damage is beyond the control of the cleaner, since he cannot predict or prevent this type of damage from appearing.

### IS THERE A REMEDY?

If the damage is small enough, the area might be repaired or re-woven, but usually the holes and/or “trails” are too numerous to make this repair practical. □