

## **Bed Bug Travel Companions**

Bed bugs are Hemiptera ("half-winged" bugs), flat, oval insects, with very short functionless forewings. The adults are 5mm long: reddish-brown in colour and become purple after feeding. The principal host is man, though other warm-blooded animals can be parasitized. They are found in human habitations throughout the world.

As bed bugs cannot fly, they must either crawl or be passively transported in clothing, luggage, furniture, books and other harbourages. They demonstrate great ability to withstand many months without feeding. This increases their chances of surviving transportation and the insects' world wide distribution confirms their breeding success. In cool climates, bed bugs reach their peak numbers in early autumn, when all stages in the life cycle will be present. With colder weather, activities decrease: egg-laying ceases and the development of the juvenile forms slows down.