

## EVERYTHING YOU EVER WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT BOW BUGS

### What is a bow bug?

Bow bugs are any bugs that may eat bow hair. The most common bug is the larva of carpet beetles known as *Anthrenus museorum*, or Dermestids. They are one millimeter wide, two to three millimeters long, and usually brown. Most people see molted shells in their instrument case which are beige in color.

### Where do they come from?

They live in many homes, often hiding in walls, under floor boards and carpets, and other overlooked places. Even the cleanest of homes may have bow bugs.

### How do I know if bow bugs ate my bow hairs?

Usually, bow bugs find their way into cases that have been in storage. If you open your case and find broken hairs with jagged ends, they were probably eaten by a bow bug. Sometimes unlucky bows can have hairs eaten even if stored for just a couple days.

### Is my instrument safe?

Yes, your instrument is safe. Bow bugs eat protein, which includes hair, unwound gut strings, genuine whale-bone wraps, tortoise shell frogs, or horn frogs. Violins are made of wood and most varnishes are safe.

### How do I get rid of bow bugs?

Thoroughly vacuuming an infested case and placing the case in sunlight or in freezing cold will kill them, but we also recommend using an insecticidal spray repellent.

### Can bow bugs be prevented?

The best solution we found is to use a pesticide/repellent spray that includes Permethrin or Permethrine as an ingredient after carefully vacuuming the case. Two brands are Sawyer's and Repel. These can be found at outdoor sporting goods stores or online. Lavender or cedar essential oils may also be used to repel bow bugs, but they are not as effective as the spray.

**WARNING:** Permethrin is harmful to cats. If your case has been treated, cats should not be allowed near (or in) your case. We do not recommend using chemical mothballs. They are extremely toxic to people and animals.

We are happy to treat your case for you. Please ask for details.

To read more on bow bugs, you may visit our web site at <https://www.johnsonstring.com/resources/bitten-by-the-bug.htm>

