

Transcript for “The Home Collection: Dealing with a Pest Infestation”

Have you ever wondered what to do when you find insects in your collection? Insect pests can eat organic collections, that is, anything animal or botanical in nature. Some clues to an infestation can include frass, otherwise known as insect poop, which can sometimes look like little black dots, webbing from moths, carpet beetle casings, or more obviously, parts of your item are missing, such as feathers or yarns.

So, what should you do? Isolate the item and bag it in a clean plastic bag, seal the bag and then freeze it. Ideally, if you have a chest freezer, use that. Otherwise, place the item in the coldest part of your freezer at as low a temperature as you can achieve. Place your item in the freezer for a minimum of 48 hours, without opening the door. Remove the item for a minimum of 24 hours, letting it come up to room temperature. And then place it back in your freezer for a minimum of 48 more hours. Thaw to room temperature before unsealing the bag, and removing your object. There’s going to be condensation on the outside of the bag. That’s why it’s key to squeeze air out of the bag when you’re sealing it. That prevents condensation from building up on the inside of the bag. And it’s okay to leave your object in the freezer for longer than 48 hours, just don’t open that door.

Here’s how to prepare a basket for freezing. Notice how I squeeze as much air as possible out of the bag, and then I seal it with a twist tie.

Here’s how to prepare a textile for freezing. Squeeze as much air out of the bag as possible, and seal it with a twist tie.

Here’s how to prepare a katsina carving for freezing. They are a little bit trickier because of feathers and small fragile parts, when it comes to squeezing the air out of the bag. Sometimes an extra set of hands really comes in handy. And then seal it with a twist tie.

To repeat, you want to bag, squeeze, seal. Then you want to freeze, thaw, freeze, thaw. Then open you bag and enjoy your pest free object.