



# What's Eating Your Collection?

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## Carbon dioxide

### **How does the treatment work?**

Carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) is a poison. Sufficient exposure to it will kill insects. Note that it will also kill people; careful monitoring of treatments is vital to ensure that they remain safe.

### **How is the treatment carried out?**

Objects are placed in a chamber or bubble, they do not need to be wrapped. Carbon dioxide is introduced and the levels are increased to about 60% and the level is monitored with a meter. There is some evidence to suggest that the presence of a small amount of oxygen makes the treatment more effective, so higher levels of carbon dioxide are counter-productive.

Increasing the temperature to 30°C can help to improve the effectiveness of the treatment.

Many insects, especially woodborers, live in a carbon dioxide-rich atmosphere and thus can tolerate high levels of CO<sub>2</sub>. Consequently, treatment times need to be 3 weeks or more to be effective.

### **Important note**

Carbon dioxide is a registered pesticide (in the UK and in many other countries) and thus can only be used by professional pest control operatives.