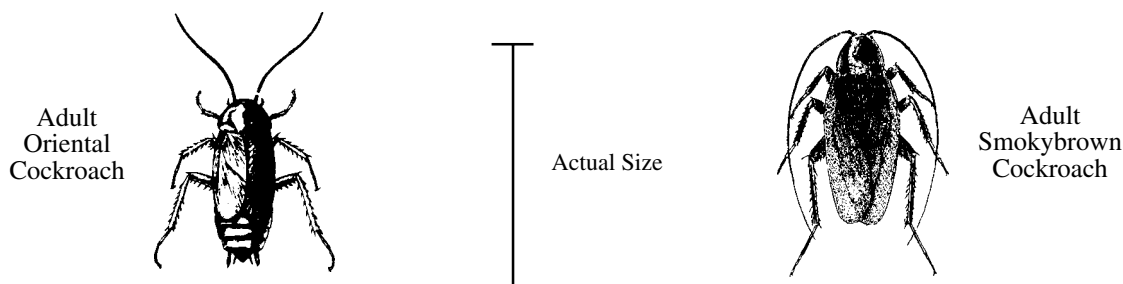


PEST CONTROL BULLETIN NO. 21

COCKROACHES



GENERAL INFORMATION

Cockroaches are troublesome pests throughout the United States. Not only are they annoying, but when abundant they may also be destructive. Roaches destroy food and damage fabrics, book bindings, and other materials. Cockroaches are flattened, fast-running nocturnal (night active) insects that frequent warm and moist areas. They are known to be disease carriers by crawling across contaminated surfaces and then crawling either on cooking or eating utensils or food, and contaminating them. Often, they will leave a very unpleasant odor on the materials they infest.

DESCRIPTION

There are five species of roaches commonly found in buildings, the American cockroach, the Oriental cockroach, the German cockroach and the brownbanded cockroach.

The **American Cockroach** (*Periplaneta americana*) is the largest of the house infesting roaches. It is 1-1/2 to 2 inches long, reddish to dark brown, and the wings completely cover the body. This roach commonly is found in basements around pipes and is a common insect living in sewer systems.

The **Oriental Cockroach** (*Blatta orientalis*) is known in some areas as the "Black Beetle" or "Black Water Bug." It is dark brown to black and 1 to 1-1/4 inches long. Females have only traces of wings and appear sometimes to have no wings at all. The males have short wings that do not cover the entire back. Infestations of this cockroach often are

overlooked because they are seldom seen during the day. They are seen at night near moist sites around the home, particularly water meter boxes.

The **German Cockroach** (*Blattella germanica*) is our most common cockroach and is sometimes called the "Croton Bug." The adults are light brown and marked on the back between the head and the wings with two longitudinal black stripes. The body length is 1/2 to 5/8 inches. This roach is more active than the other roaches in our area. They give birth to more young and complete their growth in a shorter period of time. The German cockroach usually is found in close relation to the kitchen and food areas. The homeowner may see more young German cockroaches than adults.

The **Brownbanded Cockroach** (*Supella longipalpa*) is slightly smaller than the German cockroach and lacks the two dark stripes behind the head. The wings are banded with two brownish to yellow stripes that are brighter in young adult roaches and more colorful than in the German roach.

The adult **Smokybrown Cockroach** (*Periplaneta fuliginosa*) is approximately 1-1/4 inches in length and uniformly mahogany brown in color. The wings extend back beyond the tip of the abdomen in both males and females. This species can fly and flourishes in warm, humid areas. Large nymphs are also uniformly brown in color, but younger nymphs have spotted abdomens and white ringed antennae (feelers). Smokybrown cockroach egg cases are dark brown, approximately 1/2 inch in length and contain about 24 eggs. Egg cases of this species have been found outside attached to woodpiles,

stucco walls, and in cracks and crevices of wooden roof shingles. The egg cases also have been found indoors in attics, under kitchen sinks, and inside cabinets.

PREVENTION

Check all baskets, bags, or boxes of food and drink brought into the house. Roaches hide in bulk containers of produce and those containing drinks such as a six-pack soda pop carton. Storage containers of old clothes and laundry may also support cockroach infestations and should be periodically inspected.

Cockroaches may enter houses from the outdoors, infested containers brought in from other buildings, or from adjoining homes and apartments. To prevent entry, all cracks leading to spaces behind baseboards and door frames should be filled with plaster, putty, or plastic wood. Pay special attention to water and steam pipes entering rooms.

Sanitation is also very important in roach control, especially where food is either being handled or processed. Therefore, clean all areas thoroughly so that no food particles, dust, or debris remain to create a possible cockroach infestation. Keep all food articles either in containers with tight fitting lids or in the refrigerator.

In severe infestations, remove all possible hiding places such as flags, pictures, ceramic wall decorations, calendars, dresser and table scarves, scatter rugs, and draperies. Dispose of all stored magazines, newspapers, and other accumulated items.

EXCLUSION AND CONTROL

There are effective methods and chemicals available for the control of roaches. When purchasing a pesticide to control roaches, examine the label to be sure that it includes the words "for the control of

roaches." It also is important to note the active ingredient in the product and the type of formulation you are purchasing. It is important to follow all instructions printed on the product label *to the letter*.

If roaches are found infesting the interior of the home, a variety of pesticides are available and registered for controlling roaches indoors. Before applying any pesticides, inspect the interior of the dwelling completely to determine the extent of the infestation. Then proceed by emptying all drawers, cupboards, closets, and other areas where personal items, food, and cooking/eating utensils are stored. Thoroughly vacuum the exterior and interior of all areas and surfaces to be treated.

For overall best results, apply pesticides to places where roaches hide during the day. Apply pesticides to cracks around and beneath cupboards and cabinets, cabinet corners, pipes, and electrical conduit where roaches may travel at night. Other sites to treat include the compressor compartments of refrigerators, spaces behind window and door frames, mirrors and loose baseboards, underside of tables and chairs, electronic appliance cabinets, and shelving in bookcases and closets.

When controlling roaches outdoors, be sure to treat the area around garbage and refuse containers, wood and lumber piles, and utility vaults (ground level water and cable television boxes).

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In the event that pesticides either are not appropriate or are ineffective in controlling cockroaches, it is recommended that you contact a professional entomologist who specializes in the control of insects, mites, and other arthropod pests. Entomologists with this expertise are employed by the local agricultural commissioner or a reputable pest control company. Insecticides may be purchased at nurseries, hardware, farm supply, and pet stores.



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