



GERMAN COCKROACHES

Many species of cockroaches are found in and around homes. Each species prefer different environments and food. Inspect infested areas thoroughly for structural repair and sanitation needs. Remember, cockroaches can travel in clothes, purses, furniture, and grocery bags.

Description

German cockroaches are the most commonly found species in homes. They are 5/8 inch long, medium to light brown with dark, long streaks on the area behind the head (thorax).

Location

During the day, cockroaches hide in cracks and crevices under kitchen appliances, cabinet sinks, behind baseboards, in wall voids, and in pantries. They are also found in cardboard boxes and under pallets.

Life Cycle

German cockroaches breed throughout the year. They like humid places about 80°F. Females produce more eggs than other cockroach species. The young complete their growth in a shorter time period than other species. Females may live more than 200 days.

Monitoring

Write down when cockroaches are seen. The location, size, and number of cockroaches will help determine how severe the problem is and if the treatment works.

Home Maintenance

Repair leaking plumbing and other water sources to reduce moisture and humidity. Seal spaces around pipes in walls, baseboards, loose tile, and other areas where cockroaches hide.



Cultural Methods

Sanitation is very important. Cockroaches will eat *anything* organic--even cardboard. Clean all surfaces, especially between appliances and counters. Scrub under refrigerators and stoves. Clean food and drink spills. Wipe up and discard cockroach feces with a disposable cloth. Feces contain a pheromone that attracts more roaches, and newly hatched roaches feed upon feces of older roaches.

Unpack all items shipped in cardboard boxes. Store food and supplies in plastic containers. Keep garbage in closed containers that you can empty and clean regularly. Feed pets at

Continued on Back

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German Cockroaches Continued

scheduled times and do not leave bowls of food on the floor. Stack containers safely away from walls to reduce hiding places and for quick inspections. Check monitoring traps weekly and replace as necessary to determine the effectiveness of treatment.

Use temperature to disinfect things. Heating to 115°F for 45 minutes or cooling below 23°F kills all life stages of the German cockroach.

Pesticides

If the cultural control steps on this fact sheet are not sufficient, try using containerized insecticide bait stations or gel baits. Baits are more specific than traditional chemical controls and take advantage of roach behavior. Some baits contain an insect growth regulator that keeps the roach from growing while others contain more traditional insecticides that kill the roach. All of them attract the cockroach, acting like a food source, so be sure no other food is available.

Bait placement is crucial. Set bait stations next to cracks and crevices or on the floor behind the stove or refrigerator. Other cockroaches such as the American cockroach need the bait stations set in the basement near sewer or floor drains. Always follow label directions.

Bait gels are applied inside cracks, under sinks, and in gaps between the wall and cabinets with a “bait gun” or tube. This allows targeted placements; however, gels may leave deposits of bait that cannot be easily removed. Spraying pesticides along with using gel may cause cockroaches to refuse to eat baits.

If you choose to not use baits, a wide variety of registered pesticides are available. Some of the less toxic pesticides are . . .

- A silica aerogel—usually sold in combination with pyrethrum. Together, they kill and dry the roach.
- Products containing boric acid. Boric acid is a stomach poison to cockroaches, but has little toxicity to people.
- Products that contain a derivative of chrysanthemums (pyrethrum) along with a synergist such as pipryinol butoxide.

Liquid sprays and fogs can also be effective, but they are more dangerous to use and can complicate roach control because they may cause roaches to move to other parts of the house rather than kill the roaches.

Care must be taken not to overuse any single pesticide since cockroaches can readily develop a tolerance to a particular pesticide, rendering it ineffective. Above all, read the label before applying any pesticide. The label is the law and willful misapplication of a pesticide is dangerous and illegal.