

American Cockroach

Blattaria: Blattidae, *Periplaneta americana*

Description



American cockroach adults are 1 and 1/2 inches long (38mm), making them the largest of the house-infesting cockroaches. With reddish brown, fully developed wings, the American cockroaches have a yellowish margin on the thorax or body region behind the head. When disturbed, they may run rapidly and adults may fly. Immature cockroaches resemble adults except that they are wingless. These immature cockroaches are often mistaken for a type of beetle, to the uninitiated.

American Roach Habitat:

American cockroaches generally live in moist areas, but can survive in dry areas if they have access to water. They prefer warm temperatures around 84 degrees Fahrenheit and do not tolerate cold temperatures. In residential areas, these cockroaches live in basements, around pipes and sewers, and may move outdoors into yards during warm weather. These cockroaches are common in basements, crawl spaces, cracks and crevices of porches, foundations, and walkways adjacent to buildings. Many times, the American cockroach can be found under decks, under mulching materials, inside hollow block construction, or in any cool and damp area. Because of their fondness for sewers, large populations of American cockroaches will be seen in many cities after heavy rains or flooding. They may feed on a wide variety of plant and animal material.



American Cockroach Life Cycle:

Females produce egg cases and carry them protruding from the tip of the abdomen for about two days. Egg cases are then generally placed on a surface in a hidden location. The female may glue the egg case to the side of a structure or interior wall of a basement. These egg cases may sometimes be found lying loose in mulched flower beds and compost piles. Egg cases are 3/8 inch long, brown, and purse shaped. Immature cockroaches emerge from egg cases in 6 to 8 weeks. The nymphs require 6 to 12 months to mature. Adult cockroaches can live up to one year, during which females produce an average of 150 young.

American Roach Control:



Due to the large size and slow development of American cockroaches, large infestations of these insects are not common within houses. However, during certain times of the year, these cockroaches may move inside a house from outside sources. For example, in winter these cockroaches may move indoors, seeking warmer temperatures and food. Cockroaches may enter houses via sewer connections, under doors, around utility pipes, air ducts, or other openings in the foundation. Cockroach populations in basements can be reduced by decreasing dampness and applying insecticides in cracks and crevices where there is evidence of cockroach activity (presence of egg cases, dead cockroaches, and brown fecal smears).

Treatment (Chemical):



1. Baits: Cockroach baits consist of a toxicant (active ingredient) formulated in a food source. American cockroach baits are usually packaged as dusts, gels, pastes, or granules. Dust baits are applied into cracks, crevices, and wall voids with a bulb duster or as an aerosol. Pastes and gels are usually purchased in a syringe, which can be used alone or inserted into a bait gun for more precise application. Most granular baits are applied outside in landscaping around the perimeter of the structure. However, some may be applied in wall voids using a bulb duster.
2. Insect Growth Regulators (IGRs): IGRs for cockroach control are generally not available for homeowner purchase but are professional-use-only products. These compounds do not kill cockroaches. Instead, they disrupt the normal development of immature cockroaches making them functionally sterile as adults. The cockroach population then dies of attrition. Because of the slow-acting nature of IGRs, they are frequently used in combination with baits for faster control. While IGRs are certainly capable of controlling American cockroach populations, they are not commonly used for per domestic cockroach control because the cockroaches are not breeding indoors. However, to treat incipient populations in steam tunnels or boiler rooms.
3. Inorganic Dusts: These dusts are normally applied for indoor cockroach control with a squeeze-bulb duster, which puffs the dust into cracks and crevices. Examples of these dusts are silica aero gel and boric acid. Silica aero gel is a finely ground silica (similar to glass) that adheres to the cuticle of the cockroach and absorbs the protective wax covering. This dehydrates the cockroach and eventually kills it. Boric acid is a stomach poison that also adheres to the cockroach when it walks across the dust. The cockroach will then ingest the dust while grooming itself.