



FACT SHEET

COCKROACHES

Cockroaches are primitive insects whose origin extends back at least 300 million years and are thought to have originated in the tropical and sub-tropical areas of Africa. The advent of travel and international trade has brought about the spread of cockroaches to most countries of the world.

Although worldwide, there are over 3000 species of cockroaches, only half a dozen have attained the status of pest species by adapting themselves to cohabit with man in his dwelling. The remaining non-pest species inhabit decaying plant material, dark damp areas such as caves, and beneath the bark of rotting trees.

The omnivorous appetite of cockroaches makes any unprotected foodstuffs susceptible to cockroach infestation and contamination. Their indiscriminate feeding sources in such areas as sewers, drains and garbage areas bring them in contact with disease organisms including salmonella and other organisms associated with dysentery, typhoid, hepatitis and tuberculosis.

Cockroaches are nocturnal creatures and are seldom seen in any quantity during daylight hours, however, in areas where there are heavy infestations, sightings of cockroaches may become more common. It is generally accepted that for every cockroach seen there are at least a further ten that are hidden away in out of sight harbourages. Common harbourage areas include cracks and crevices, dishwashers, electrical motors and switches, oven and almost any warm, moist areas where food is available.

Tell tale signs indicating cockroach activity include the presence of egg cases, regurgitation marks, faecal pellets, odour and cast-off nymphal skins.

Infestation occurs when cockroaches are carried into premises on raw materials or packaging or gain entry to the premises through drain covers, ventilation openings and under doors.

Most common species have wings, but have a tendency to crawl rather than fly. When disturbed, cockroaches have the ability to scurry away with remarkable haste.

LIFE CYCLE

Following mating, the female cockroaches enclose their eggs in purse-shaped egg cases which they deposit or glue onto a surface prior to the eggs hatching. The young cockroaches, or nymphs as they are referred to, emerge from the egg case and over a period of up to a year, go through 5-12 moults as they increase in size. They achieve adulthood after the final moult and are capable of breeding 2-3 weeks later. They are prolific breeders with the most common of the pest species, the German cockroach, being capable of producing 20,000 offspring within a twelve month period. Female cockroaches also have the ability to produce young without mating. This is referred to as parthenogenesis.

COCKROACH CONTROL

Successful cockroach control is based on Integrated Pest Management (IPM) starting with a thorough inspection of the entire premises to identify the species and to define the extent and source of infestation. Observations made during the inspection enable a program to be proposed which considers all possible facets of control procedures including proofing, trapping, sanitation, hygiene and the judicious use of preparations.

Recent preparations developed for cockroach control are of low mammalian toxicity and do not persist in the environment. A new group of preparations called insect growth regulators are being presently used by the industry. These compounds prevent the immature stage of the insect from achieving adulthood and so prevent the propagation of the species. The advantage of such formulations is that they usually specific to a particular pest and have little effect against non-target species.

AMAZING COCKROACH FACTS

Disease Transmission. Cockroaches can carry organisms that cause human diseases, including food poisoning, dysentery and diarrhoea.

Repulsive Odour. Most cockroaches produce a secretion or chemical that has a repulsive odour. This characteristic odour can be detected in infested areas.

Allergy. Cockroaches can cause allergic reactions in some people. The response is caused by cockroach "allergen" that is ingested with contaminated food or inhaled when dried faecal particles and fragments of ground-up bodies of dead roaches are mixed with house dust.

Anxiety. The sight of cockroaches can cause considerable psychological or emotional distress in some individuals. Cockroaches usually do not bite, but their heavy leg spines may scratch.

Run for Your Lives!

The world's largest cockroach, which lives in South America, is six inches long with a one-foot wingspan.

Cockroaches By the Numbers

6 -- Number of legs on a cockroach

18 -- Number of knees on most cockroaches (at least!)

40-- Number of minutes cockroaches can hold their breath

75 -- Percentage of time that cockroaches spend just resting (how lazy can you get?)

5,000 -- Number of species of cockroaches worldwide

280 million+ -- Years ago that cockroaches are thought to have originated (during the Carboniferous era)

Bad News

Some female cockroaches mate once and are pregnant for the rest of their lives.

The Legend of the Headless Cockroach

A cockroach can live a week without its head. The roach only dies because without a mouth, it can't drink water and dies of thirst.

Wanna Race?

Cockroaches can run up to three miles in an hour. (Hey, it's no marathon, but it's not bad.)

Better Check Those Cracks in the Wall

Young cockroaches need only a crack as thin as a coin (about .5mm wide) to crawl into. Adult males can squeeze into a space of 1.6mm. Pregnant females need the most space to hide: 4.5mm.

Little Hearts

A cockroach heart is nothing but a simple tube with valves. The tube can pump blood backwards and forwards in the insect. The heart can even stop moving without harming the roach.



 1300 13 12 14

www.goodepestcontrol.com.au