

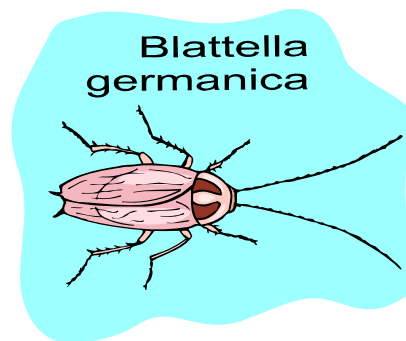
Cockroaches

Where Found

Most people dislike having any “bugs” in their home. They become more distressed if the “bugs” in their home or apartment are cockroaches. In restaurants, a business operator becomes quite disturbed if he finds even one cockroach, especially when he knows how quickly they multiply.

It is commonly perceived that cockroaches live in unsanitary and poorly kept homes, and there is a negative stigma attached to having them. However, cockroaches live in homes belonging to all economic classes of people and ethnic groups. They are often brought into non-infested residences or businesses through human activities (food, furniture, clothing).

In Edmonton, the German cockroach is the most common cockroach found in homes, apartments, restaurants and grocery stores.



Habits

The lifecycle begins when a mature female cockroach produces an egg case. The female will carry the egg case containing about 50 eggs until they are ready to hatch. The case is dropped in a secluded area (crevices, clothes, briefcases etc.) and the eggs hatch in about one month into small versions of the adults called nymphs. They develop into adults within two to four months, and adults live about six months.

During the day, cockroaches hide in groups behind baseboards, in cracks and crevices in the kitchen and under stoves, refrigerators and dishwashers. Without food and water adults may die in two weeks.

Problems Caused

Because cockroaches contaminate food with their excrement and produce an oily liquid that has an offensive odor which can permeate indoor air, they are considered one of the worst household pests. The nauseating odor can also be imparted to utensils that are apparently clean.

Many individuals are allergic to cockroaches. One study (May 8, 1997 *The New England Journal of Medicine*) has conclusively demonstrated that “allergy and exposure to cockroach allergen is an important cause of asthma-related illness and hospitalizations among children in United States inner-city areas.”

Allergens present in the feces of cockroaches become airborne along with house dust. The allergens can then be inhaled from air or ingested when in contact with food. Cockroaches can also contaminate food with bacteria that can cause food poisoning or diarrhea. They have been found to harbor *Salmonella*, *Staphylococcus*, *Streptococcus* and *Coliform* bacteria.

Ways to Prevent Infestations

Inspect all foods, used appliances, furniture etc. brought into the house and destroy any cockroaches or egg capsules. Caulk all cracks and crevices.

Sanitation will aid considerably in cockroach control. Poor housekeeping is a major contributing factor of infestations. Kitchen areas should be regularly cleaned and kitchen wastes should be kept in tightly covered garbage cans. Leftover pet foods should not remain in the feeding dish overnight.

Control Measures

Whether a home owner decides to do it himself or hire a pest control company, the most effective type of cockroach control includes using several methods at the same time to reduce populations. This approach is called “Integrated Pest Management” and includes the following:

1. Reduce or remove the availability of water, food and hiding places.
2. Use cold or heat treatments for small appliances that are infested.
3. Use sticky traps.
4. Use desiccants (diatomaceous earth or silica aerogel) or boric acid.
5. Use liquid or aerosol sprays containing permethrin.

Before using an insecticide, **READ THE LABEL** and follow directions and safety precautions. If a cockroach infestation is too severe, then a pest control company should be hired.

For more information, please contact your nearest Environmental Public Health Services office.

Edmonton Main Office
Capital Health Centre - South Tower
Strathcona

(780) 413-7928
(780) 735-1400
(780) 342-4661

Spruce Grove
Leduc
St. Albert

(780) 962-7509
(780) 980-4644
(780) 459-6671

EPHB-06-005
Created: Jul/06
Updated: Sept/08