



Cockroaches: Prevention & Control

Cockroaches (or plainly “roaches”) are one of the most commonly noted household pest insects. There are close to 4,000 species of cockroach worldwide, of which 30 species are associated with human habitations. The more common pest species in our area are the *American cockroach*, the *Oriental cockroach* and the *German cockroach*.

Cockroaches thrive where food and water are available to them. Even tiny amounts of crumbs or liquids caught between cracks provide a food source.

Important sanitation measures include the following:

- Store food in insect-proof containers such as glass jars or sealable plastic containers.
- Keep garbage and trash in containers with tight-fitting lids. *Remove trash, newspapers, magazines, piles of paper bags, rags, boxes, and other items that provide hiding places and harborage.
- Eliminate plumbing leaks and correct other sources of free moisture. Increase ventilation where condensation is a problem.
- Vacuum cracks and crevices to remove food and debris. Be sure surfaces where food or beverages have been spilled are cleaned up immediately, especially behind refrigerators, stoves, etc. Vacuuming also removes cockroaches, shed skins, and egg capsules. Removing cockroaches reduces their numbers and slows development. Vacuumed cockroaches and debris should be destroyed. Because bits of cuticle and droppings may be allergenic, it is recommended that the vacuum cleaner have HEPA (high efficiency particulate absorber) or triple filters.
- Trim shrubbery around buildings to increase light and air circulation, especially near vents, and eliminate ivy or other dense ground covers near the house, as these may harbor cockroaches.
- De-grease kitchen equipment and utensils. German roaches flourish in environments where cooking fats are present.
- Remove trash and stored items such as stacks of lumber or firewood that provide hiding places for cockroaches from around the outside of buildings.

Exclusion and Removal of Hiding Places

During the day cockroaches hide around water heaters, in cupboard cracks, stoves, crawl spaces, outdoor vegetation, and many other locations. They invade kitchens and other areas at night. Limiting hiding areas or avenues of access to living areas is an essential part of an effective management strategy. False-bottom cupboards, hollow walls, and similar areas are common cockroach refuges. Prevent access to the inside of buildings through cracks, conduits, under doors,

or through other structural flaws. If it is not practical to remedy these problem areas, treat them with boric acid powder.

Take the following measures if roaches are migrating into a building from outdoors or other areas of the building:

- Seal cracks and other openings to the outside.
- Look for other methods of entry, such as from items being brought into the building, especially appliances, furniture, and items that were recently in storage.
- Look for oothecae (nymph) glued to undersides of furniture, in refrigerator and other appliance motors, boxes, and other items. Remove and destroy any that are located.
- Locate and seal cracks inside the treatment area where cockroaches can hide.

Do not introduce cockroaches into your home:

- Inspect grocery bags and boxes before bringing into the home. These items could have become cockroach nests while sitting in either the store or warehouse from which they came.
- Use caution when purchasing secondhand items. Fabric and wooden furniture may be infested.

Do-it-yourself control:

- Use caution when using roach “sprays”. Most sprays contain a “flushing” agent that drives roaches out into un-infested areas. You may increase the scope of the problem. Try bait stations containing fipronil (not chlorpyrifos). If these do not work, try gel baits. Gel baits are less hazardous to people and pets, they are applied on smaller surfaces, and they generally last longer.

CAUTION!

Read all product directions very carefully before buying insecticides and again before you apply them. If you are uncomfortable or unsure as to their application, we recommend you acquire the services of a certified licensed pest control operator.



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