

# COCKROACHES



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### Physical Identification

Cockroaches are insects of the order Blattodea, which also includes termites. About 30 cockroach species out of 4,600 are associated with human habitats. About four species are well known as pests. The cockroaches are an ancient group, dating back at least as far as the Carboniferous period, some 320 million years ago.

### Feeding

Cockroaches are omnivorous scavengers and will consume any organic food source available to them. Although they prefer sweets, meats and starches, they are also known to consume other items such as hair, books and decaying matter.

### Lifecycle

Life Cycle Stages. All cockroaches develop by completing a life cycle consisting of three distinct stages: egg, nymph, and adult. The cockroach life cycle starts with the production of eggs. Adult females produce between 10 and 40 eggs at a time, which they carry in specialized cases called ootheca.

### Harbourage

#### **Wood**

We've all seen cockroaches in wooden cabinets (nowadays more likely particle board), but don't confine the idea of wood just to this. Anything made with wood will count. Paper bags? Check. Cardboard? Check. Books, phone books, and so forth? Check again.

#### **Water**

It's not quite right to say "water," but it works for the mnemonic device. What they are really attracted to, is damp areas. Does the refrigerator drip at the condenser? There you have a source of water. Older refrigerators even have a drip pan and cardboard on the back. That gives you two checks. Wooden cabinets hold moisture from a dripping sink. That gives

you another two checks.

### **Warmth**

Cockroaches are attracted to warm areas. Thinking back to the old refrigerator above, it had cardboard on the back (wood), a dripping condenser motor (water), and of course, if it's running, warmth.

This is why refrigerators can be a key harbourage area in a home. Finding cockroach harbourages is a matter of learning what makes for a good harbourage and applying it in control situations.

By all means, they can infest areas that don't have any of these features, but they are more likely to be food where you have the more ideal conditions for them. The Three W's are just some of the factors to look for when trying to find cockroach harbourages. In a future post, we'll look at some other key factors.

### **Health Risk**

Another health risk of cockroaches is allergic reactions. Cockroaches are one of the most common allergens reported, with studies finding anywhere from 20 to 60 percent of urban residents presenting with cockroach allergies. These symptoms can range from itching and redness to severe asthma.



German cockroach



American cockroach



Oriental cockroach