

CRICKETS



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Physical Identification

There are thought to be around 900 species of true crickets belonging to the “Gryllidae” family. These crickets tend to be nocturnal and are generally characterized by slightly flattened looking, light brown to dark brown colored bodies and long antennae. Throughout the region you may refer to them more commonly as the “field cricket”. Like all insects, their bodies are protected by an exoskeleton, which is a tough outer casing or shell.

Possibly the most memorable characteristic of the cricket is its long hind legs which, as well as being used to jump, are used for communication. Only the male cricket can “chirp” and does so by rubbing its hind legs against a forewing with between 50 to 300 ribs on it.

Feeding

Crickets have chewing mouthparts, and are scavengers that typically feed on living or decaying plants, fungi, or other organic materials. Crickets are often found in fields, pastures, lawns, roadsides, and wooded areas. They can also feed on a variety of fabrics, foods and paper products.

Lifecycle

House crickets have three stages in their life cycle: egg, nymph, and adult. They can live for over six weeks and their entire life cycle lasts two to three months depending on their surroundings. These crickets thrive when the temperature is between 80 and 90°F.

Mating

To attract females, male crickets chirp by scraping their wings together. After mating, a fertile female will lay eggs almost continuously. She will use her ovipositor, a tube-like organ, to deposit eggs in whatever damp substrate is available. A female can easily lay 100 eggs, and sometimes as many as 200 eggs, during her life.

Egg

A cricket begins its life in an egg. After about 14 days, it will have developed into a nymph. It will break the egg capsule and dig out of the substrate.

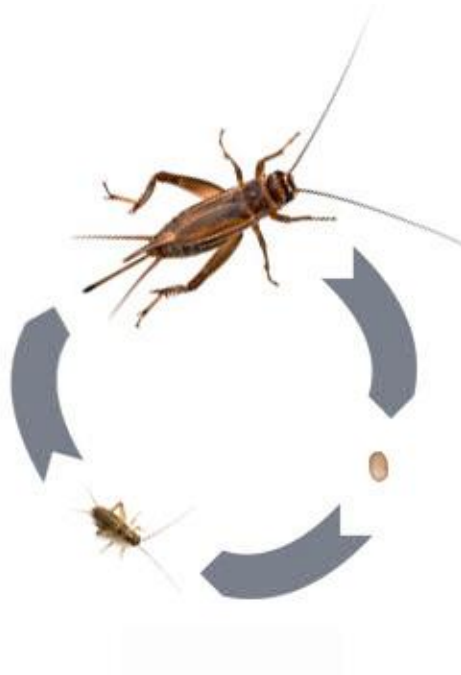
Nymph

Nymphs look like small versions of adult crickets with a few differences. They are not as developed so initially do not have wings and females do not have ovipositors. These young crickets often become prey for larger crickets and other insects.

In order to grow, a nymph has to shed its hard exoskeleton. This process is called molting and happens 8 to 10 times. The new exoskeleton is milky white and soft until it hardens in a few hours. A nymph will begin growing its wings after about a month.

Adult

Once a cricket reaches maturity its wings are fully developed and it only has two goals: eating and mating. A male will attempt to attract fertile females. Once mating has occurred, a female will spend her time finding suitable places to lay her eggs.



Harbourage

Crickets are found on the soil, hiding under dead plants or on live plants. They only occur where there is plant material to eat, and they are most diverse and abundant in humid areas with lots of plants.

Health Risk

If you're a human, crickets aren't particularly harmful. This is one of the many reasons you probably shouldn't have crickets hopping around inside your house. House crickets can bite, but they aren't inclined to bite humans and it is rare for their mouthparts to be able to break the skin.



Black Ground Cricket



Brown Mole Cricket



Parktown Prawn



Brown Mole Cricket



Stripped Ground Cricket



Ground Cricket



Say's Trig Cricket



Black Field Cricket