

Cockroaches: What You Need to Know as a Homeowner

Homeownership can have a lot of unforeseen problems, usually at the most inconvenient times. One of the main issues for any household is pests. From rodents and birds to spiders and insects, the last thing anyone needs in their home is unwanted guests. One of the worst indoor pests is cockroaches. Hard to get rid of and always hiding, cockroaches are sneaky and hang around for quite some time. Where do cockroaches hide though, and how do you get rid of them?

There are three main types of cockroaches, the American cockroach, the German cockroach, and the Brown Banded cockroach. The American and German cockroaches prefer hot and humid areas while the Brown Banded cockroach is found in drier climates. It is important to identify a cockroach problem early as they are unclean insects. They carry diseases such as salmonella and gastroenteritis and can irritate asthma and allergies.

The American Cockroach: A Common Pest

The American cockroach is common in sewer systems, basements, and kitchens. They are characterized by a reddish-brown color and a yellow band surrounding the area behind their head. These cockroaches can fly when they reach adulthood. Females lay around 16 eggs at a time and will leave the egg sac in a hot, humid place. The American cockroach can reach adulthood in as little as five and a half months. They can live up to two and a half years.

Their diet consists of fungi and algae outdoors. Indoors, they will find scraps of food under appliances, in drains, and any food left out whether it be human or pet. While they prefer the climate of the basement or garage, they can be found foraging in kitchens and bathrooms. The American cockroach is known to come indoors during colder weather. They cannot handle cold temperatures and thrive better in moist climates.

The signs of the American cockroach include droppings, egg capsules, and the emission of odor. The odor is described as a musty smell and is from the pheromone that keeps the cockroaches in groups. In order to control the infestation of roaches, insecticide is a common place to start. Also, by sealing any cracks in basements and fixing weather stripping that may be broken. Cleaning under appliances and cabinets and eliminating food sources is a preventative measure that will help stop the infestation of the American cockroach.

The German Cockroach: Smelly and Difficult

The German cockroach lives in hot, humid areas usually above basement level. They are tan or light brown with two black horizontal stripes behind their head. While adults do have wings, they prefer to run. Infestation can happen fast, as females lay 40 eggs at a time. The German cockroach also matures rapidly, in as little as two months. They live for about one and a half years.

Commonly, the German cockroach eats meats, starches, and sugars. They are a hearty breed of roach, turning to toothpaste, soap, and if starved each other's wings and legs as a food source. The roaches live in small, tight spaces such as cracks in walls. In buildings, they live in drain pipes and electrical appliances which adds to their rapid spread. This makes it easy to miss them as they are very good at hiding.

Like the American cockroach, the German cockroach produces a musty-like odor. They can also be recognized by droppings and egg sacs in cabinets and under appliances. However, the German cockroach is much harder to get rid of. The German cockroach can be nearly impossible to stop in restaurants, apartment buildings, and food processing plants. One of the main reasons is due to the adaptations of the roach making them resistant to sugar bait. Caulking cracks and crevices around drains and windows can help deter their entrance. If any signs of the German cockroach are detected, it is best to consult professional help as soon as possible.

The Brown Banded Cockroach: The Pest That Eats Anything

The Brown Banded cockroach is found in warm, dry climates. They are one of the smallest cockroaches and are brown in color. The adults have light brown bands present on their wings while the young have the bands on their bodies. The Brown Banded cockroach usually lays eighteen eggs that hatch in about a month and a half. They usually live less than a year.

Known as the furniture cockroach, the Brown Banded cockroach has a wide variety of diets. They will eat anything from pantry crumbs or trash to curtains or wallpaper glue. The roaches do not need moisture to thrive. They mainly live in living rooms and bedrooms. Used furniture and electronics are where they can hide and enter new homes. This makes the Brown Banded cockroach hard to detect and easily spread.

The Brown Banded cockroach has a similar appearance to the German cockroach. It is key to identify the cockroach in order to start ridding. They are usually active at night but can be seen during the day scavenging for food. The roaches leave signs such as droppings and egg sacs. They are problematic to get rid of due to their wide variety of diets. Brown Banded cockroaches can be seen flying around lights or will fly if disturbed. Certain baits can be used, but consult a pest specialist if a Brown Banded cockroach infestation is likely.

Can I Use Over-the-Counter Insecticides?

Some insecticides can be hazardous to pets. Almost all aerosol sprays pose a threat to dogs and cats. They can cause minor irritation such as nausea and drooling but can also lead to vomiting and diarrhea. If there are pets in the home, it is important to read the labels on insecticides and roach traps. There are many pet-friendly treatments for cockroaches on the market. It is still a good option to keep the pets away from the treated area as much as possible. Keep bait traps out of reach of pets such as in cabinets or on shelves.

Benefits of Hiring a Pest Control Specialist

The American, German, and Brown Banded roaches can indeed cause havoc in any household environment. Each poses a threat no matter the climate. The American and German cockroaches love humidity while the Brown Banded loves dry, warm places. Cockroaches carry diseases and can even cause problems such as asthma or allergies. As in any infestation, early detection is key for controlling and removing the roaches. Although over-the-counter traps and poisons may help, a pest control specialist is the best option for stopping the roaches once and for all.