



A Guide to German Cockroach (*Blattella germanica*)



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Alameda County Department of Environmental Health

Appearance

The German cockroach can measure up to 5/8 inch in length. It is a flattened light to dark brown insect with long antennae, and has two dark stripes on a shield-shaped section behind the head. At maturity, this cockroach has wings that nearly cover the entire body, but they are very weak fliers.



Behavior

The German cockroach is the species most commonly found indoors. Populations can be found in residential and commercial kitchens, food processing plants, hotels and nursing homes. These cockroaches can infest electrical appliances and food storage areas. They may be brought into your home by hitching a ride on boxes, bags, used furniture and appliances. A light tan egg case containing approximately 35 eggs will be carried by the female. She will drop the case 1 to 2 days before it hatches. This species of cockroach can build up its population rapidly. In a year's time, a single female and her offspring can produce over



30,000 individuals. These cockroaches are omnivorous scavengers, eating both plant and animal materials. They are particularly attracted to meats, sugars, fatty foods, and grease. When food is limited they may resort to eating “non-food” items such as soap and cockroach carcasses.

Control

Sanitation, exclusion and monitoring are required for long-term control. Large infestations are difficult to control and may require the services of a pest control professional.

Sanitation: Eliminate all food and water sources by cleaning all appliances, dishes, floors and walls. All grease marks must be thoroughly cleaned. Trash cans need tight fitting lids. Food items should be stored in sealable glass or plastic containers. Minimize clutter by disposing of unnecessary boxes, piles of papers, etc. Regular vacuuming will help eliminate minute food particles and remove dead cockroaches and their shed skins. The use of a vacuum with a HEPA filter is highly recommended.

Exclusion: Caulk all cracks and gaps. Pay particular attention to spaces around pipes, electrical outlets, moldings, trims, and the cabinets and cupboards around the ovens.

Monitoring: Be observant for any signs of these cockroaches. If detected, or you suspect activity, insect glue-boards should be placed to see if this is an isolated incident or an actual infestation.

Cockroach bait stations, gel baits, insect growth regulators, dusts and sprays are available. Insecticides will suppress the population of German cockroaches. It is best to consult a professional before applying, as incorrect use can exacerbate an infestation. Please contact us for consultations, inspections, identifications, and recommendations.



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