

Controlling Cockroaches

W.L. Gojmerac

Cockroaches are hardy insects that can be a considerable nuisance. They thrive on all kinds of food and organic matter including starch, glue, fabrics, books, and papers. They carry disease and contaminate food they contact.

A dual attack on cockroaches is the most effective way to keep them from becoming a problem in your home. Follow good housecleaning techniques and use a recommended insecticide when necessary.

What They Look Like

There are several common kinds of cockroaches, ranging from 1/2 to 2 inches long. They have oval flat bodies and six long legs. Their color varies from light reddish-brown to black. Adults of most species have wings, which are used for gliding. Young cockroaches look like the adults, except they are smaller and wingless. The German cockroach, also called "croton bug" or "water bug" is the most common kind.

Where They Come From

The female lays her eggs in a leathery capsule. She drops the egg capsule in a protected spot to develop and hatch. From 10 to 30 cockroaches may come from one egg capsule.

Cockroaches come in from outdoors, or from adjoining buildings or apartments. Often the egg capsules are carried in with packages, boxes, clothing, purses, toys and furniture.

Cockroaches hide during the day in dark, damp places. They come out to feed at night. When disturbed they scurry rapidly back to their hiding places. When food, temperature, and moisture conditions are unfavorable, they develop slowly. However, in dirty, damp, warm areas where they have enough food, they breed rapidly.

How To Control Them

Housekeeping

The first step in a control program is to remove the roaches' available food. Cockroaches thrive on food crumbs. Make sure all food packages are sealed. Wash dishes as soon as

you're through using them. Sweep the floor daily. Since cockroaches feed at night, make sure to do kitchen cleanup activities in the evening. Don't overlook cleaning regularly behind the refrigerator and underneath appliances. Don't leave pet food out overnight.

Sprays

Commercial insecticides containing bendiocarb (Ficam), carbaryl (Sevin), diazinon (Knox Out or Spectracide), malathion, naled (Dibrom) and propoxur (Baygon) are approved for roach control.

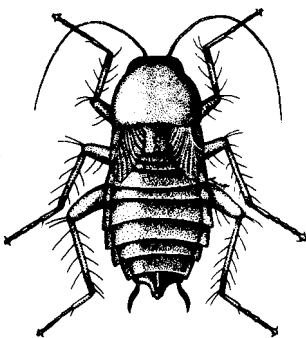
You can purchase ready-to-use preparations or a concentrate which you mix with water. These products are generally available in most nursery or garden supply centers, some supermarkets and in most hardware stores. When buying an insecticide check the list of active ingredients on the label to make sure the product contains the right chemical for *cockroach control* and is suitable for *indoor use*. Some products designed for outdoor use may leave an objectionable odor when used indoors. The EPA has approved chemicals known to interfere or upset normal roach growth or reproduction. Gencor (hydroprene) is an example. Such products are effective if used properly.

Follow the label directions and precautions exactly. Don't design your own mixture by adding several ingredients unless the label specifically states this should be done.

Some products containing pyrethrins, or dichlorvos (Vapona) are designed for control of flying insects. They will kill only those roaches hit with the spray.

Dusts or Granules

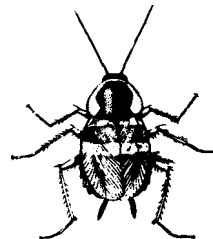
Insecticide dusts or granules containing some of the previously mentioned insecticides work well in places hard to reach with sprays. Blow or distribute the material into roach hiding spots. Be sure children and pets cannot get into or at the material.



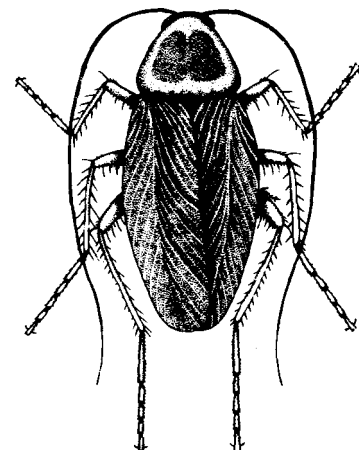
Oriental



German



Brown-Banded



American

When cockroaches are numerous and hard to get rid of, use both preparations.

Boric acid is another chemical that will control cockroaches. While boric acid maybe purchased in a drug store, this is not the appropriate product for roach control. The product designed for roach control must be packaged and labeled according to EPA regulations. Such labels should include the EPA registration number, specific application directions, and appropriate safety precautions.

Many people mistakenly believe that boric acid is a nontoxic chemical. This is not true—it must be toxic (poisonous) to kill cockroaches. In addition, boric acid is used at 100 percent strength. Most other synthetic insecticides are used at rather low concentrations, often only .25 to 1 percent.

Baits and Traps

You can buy chemically treated baits and place them where roaches frequent. (MAXFORCE is an example). Conventional baits contain a poison which kills roaches when they eat it in large quantities. These products are effective when used properly. Keep in mind, when using bait that they must be at least as attractive to the roach as its common food, which is why you should remove its other food from the environment.

You can also use sticky traps or glue boards, sold under a variety of names, to reduce roaches. Part of these traps or devices are covered with a sticky, nondrying adhesive. As roaches or other pests walk over the surface they become embedded on it. Replace these traps when roaches, dust or debris are abundant on trap surfaces.

For any of these methods, don't expect instantaneous results. Often a second or third treatment is required.

Places To Treat

Spray or dust where cockroaches hide:

- Ž Around the kitchen sink and drainboard
- Ž In cracks around or underneath cupboards and cabinets
- Ž Around pipes or conduits where they pass along the wall or go through it
- Ž Inside refrigerator motor compartments
- Ž Behind window and door frames
- Ž Behind loose baseboards and molding strips
- Ž In radio and television cabinets
- Ž On underside of tables and chairs

- Ž Behind mirrors
- Ž On closet and bookcase shelves

When treating cupboards and pantries, take everything off the shelves and remove drawers so food and utensils are not contaminated by the insecticide. Remove old shelf paper. Then spray all surfaces. Let the spray dry. You can then cover shelves with fresh shelf paper.

If drawers are cleaned thoroughly you will not need to spray inside them; however, do spray outside surfaces.

Use Insecticides Safely

1. Check the directions and safety recommendations every time you use insecticide.
2. Keep insecticides in original, labeled containers in a place secure from irresponsible persons, children, and animals.
3. Store in a place where insecticides cannot be accidentally mistaken for food or cleaning products.
4. Put away or cover carefully all foods, dishes, and utensils before spraying.
5. Keep people and animals away from places being treated.
6. Avoid unnecessary exposure when using insecticides.
7. Don't smoke, eat or drink at the same time you are working with insecticides.
8. Wash hands and face thoroughly with soap and water after using insecticides.
9. Throw empty containers in the trash. Do not leave them where children or animals can come into contact with them.

NOTE: In case of accidental poisoning, call your doctor immediately. Be sure to save the insecticide label.

References to pesticide products in this publication are for your convenience and are not an endorsement of one product over other similar products. You are responsible for using pesticides according to the manufacturer's current label directions. Follow directions exactly to protect the environment and people from pesticide exposure. Failure to do so violates the law.

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