

C O C K R O A C H E S

History

There are over 4000 different species of cockroach, of which only 12 have become adapted to the human environment. The two most common species found in this country are the Oriental cockroach and the German cockroach.

Appearance

The Oriental cockroach ranges from 20 – 30 mm in length and is almost black in colour. The German cockroach is much smaller at 10 – 15 mm in length and is brown in colour.

The easiest way to distinguish between the two species is by assessing their ability to climb. The German cockroach is able to climb vertical glass surfaces, whereas the Oriental cockroach is only able to climb rough non-vertical surfaces. If you see cockroaches climbing up walls with ease, then they are probably German.

Although both species have wings, they do not fly, but can glide from high to low level.

Both German and Oriental cockroaches have prominent whip-like antennae.

Life Cycle

The female German cockroach lays 4-8 egg capsules each containing 30 eggs at monthly intervals. The female carries the egg cases until the eggs are ready to hatch when she deposits the case close to a food source. The young will then emerge up to 2 weeks later and will go through a series of 5-7 moults over a six-month period before reaching adulthood. Adult German cockroaches live for approximately six months.

The female oriental cockroach produces five thick walled egg cases each containing 16 eggs at monthly intervals. The female will again deposit the egg cases near to a food source. The young will emerge up to 12 weeks later and will go through a series of 7-10 moults taking up to 2 years to reach adulthood. If conditions are highly unfavourable the eggs may not hatch for up to 2 years. Adult Oriental cockroaches live for approximately four and a half months.

Habits and Habitat

The German cockroach is often referred to as the steam fly as it inhabits warm, damp places such as laundries, kitchens and bathrooms.

The Oriental cockroach prefers cooler temperatures and is often found in cellars, basements and service ducting. They will also be found in the cooler areas in kitchens and bathrooms.

Both Oriental and German cockroaches are primarily nocturnal and will only be seen during the daytime when their harbourages are full. Harbourages will be located in inaccessible areas beneath kitchen units, baths and showers. Cockroaches need access to a source of water, so will often be found in the vicinity of sinks and drains.

Spread of Disease

Cockroaches can spread disease, as they typically inhabit unclean areas and may then walk over food preparation surfaces, thereby contaminating food intended for human consumption. However there are no specific disease linked to cockroaches and evidence of direct disease transmission is scarce.



German Cockroaches



Oriental Cockroaches

Control Methods

Cockroaches can be eradicated using broadband insecticides, which are only available for professional use. It is very important that you prepare the property appropriately before spraying; empty all kitchen cupboards and pull all furniture away from the walls. Furthermore it is important that you keep all foodstuffs in sealed plastic containers and empty dustbins regularly.