

# Cockroaches Found Indoors

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## Fast Facts

- Seek solid objects in which to maintain contact (called thigmotactic). They prefer to hide in tight places.
- Can mechanically transfer bacteria that cause infections including salmonellosis and gastroenteritis.
- Their saliva, exoskeleton and feces are responsible for childhood allergies and can trigger asthma.

## General Description

Cockroaches are oval shaped, with long threadlike antennae and running legs. Their head is tucked under the pronotum, which is a protective cover. They prefer darkness and live cracks and crevices. Adult roaches in Nebraska may or may not have wings, regardless most do not fly. They feed on organic waste, pet food, and garbage. They undergo incomplete metamorphosis and immature forms are smaller, wingless versions of the adult. Adult females produce egg capsules called ootheca, from which multiple offspring emerge.



American cockroach hiding in harborage.

Characteristics of Cockroach	German Cockroach	Brown-banded Cockroach	American Cockroach	Oriental Cockroach	Wood Cockroach
Size of Adult	1/2 inch	1/2 inch	1-1/2 inches	1-1/4 inches	1 inch
Wings	Full wings	Full wings (male, short wings (female)	Long thick wings	3/4 wings (male), no wings (female)	Full & functional wings (male), Short wings (female)
Color	Light brown	Light & dark brown	Reddish-brown	Black & shiny	Brown, clear margin (males)
Pronotum	Dark bands (II)	Light bands (=)	Halo or (M) shape	No pattern	Clear margin
Ootheca	30-40 nymphs	16 nymphs	12 nymphs	14-16 nymphs	32 nymphs
Location	Kitchens, bathrooms	Living rooms, classrooms	Steam tunnels, storm sewers, basements	Basements, sump pumps, laundry rooms	Firewood, garages, porches
Environment	Warm & high moisture	Warm (80°F) & dry	Warm (80°F) & high moisture	Cool & damp	Outdoors, wood piles
Non-Chemical	Sanitation	Sanitation	Sanitation, exclusion	Sanitation, exclusion	Exclusion
Chemical	Gel bait	Gel bait	Granular bait, exterior spray	Granular bait, exterior spray	Not recommended



German cockroach



Brown-banded cockroach



American cockroach



Oriental cockroach



Pennsylvania wood cockroach



Left to right: American, Oriental, German, brown-banded

## Management

For survival, cockroaches need food, water and shelter. Improving sanitation includes actions such as storing food in air tight containers, cleaning up spills help, fixing leaky sinks, and managing trash and compost can reduce available food and water sources and limit population growth. Exclusion is also important so that cockroaches cannot gain entry into the home. This includes caulking and sealing penetrations around utility pipes, filling holes in the floors and walls and screening floor drains. Removing leaf litter, fixing drainage issues, trimming vegetation, managing mulch, and cleaning out window wells and gutters will reduce harborage from the larger cockroaches may be coming in from outside. Cockroach specific bait can control cockroaches and are a least toxic alternative to spraying indoors. Some infestations may warrant an exterior perimeter treatment with spray, dust or granular