

Cockroach Factsheet

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Cockroaches are pest insects found anywhere people live. They are nocturnal and prefer to live in dark, tight spaces, so they are difficult to find and control. Cockroach waste can contaminate food, contain allergens, and even trigger asthmatic reactions, posing a significant public health threat. The four most common pest cockroach species in the Midwest are described below:

COMMON PEST COCKROACHES

German cockroaches are one of the most common indoor pests in the US. These small, 1/2-inch insects are easy to identify through two dark lines on their pronotum, the shield-like body part that partially covers their head. They are commonly found in groups nesting in dark, humid tight places in the home like kitchens and bathrooms. Immature and adult cockroaches tend to cluster together.



American cockroaches are much larger (up to 2 inches) and are found in moist, warm, humid, food-rich places like sewers, kitchens, and drains, which can help them spread to new areas. These insects are mostly dark brown with a characteristic “batman” shape on their pronotum. They don’t commonly infest homes, but prefer industrial buildings like restaurants, grocery stores, and apartment buildings. They prefer to eat fermenting foods.



Oriental cockroaches, also commonly called “water bugs”, are 1 inch long and very dark brown all over. A male Oriental cockroach has wings, but females are wingless. They prefer dark, damp areas like basements, crawlspaces, and sewers. Oriental cockroaches are commonly found in basements or first floors of buildings. They feed on garbage and organic material.



Brown-banded cockroaches are about the same size as German cockroaches (1/2 inch) and prefer warm temperatures (around 80°F). They can be identified by their dark brown heads and two light, horizontal bands in the middle of their body. They are commonly found on appliances like TVs and refrigerators.



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