

# Cockroaches



In Britain, only two species of cockroach are generally found – the German cockroach and the Oriental cockroach.

The German cockroach prefers warm, moist environments, particularly heating systems in large buildings, bakeries and so on. German cockroaches can swim and can easily climb smooth surfaces. The insect is often difficult to get rid of as it hides in places that are hard to reach.

The German cockroach is 12 to 15 millimetres long, mid-brown, with a yellow/brown thorax that has two dark brown stripes, and long antennae. It can fly but does not do so often. The wings are full length in the male but two-thirds length in the female.

The female cockroach produces an egg case which can contain 30 to 40 eggs. The eggs develop for two to four weeks, depending on the temperature, and hatch as nymphs, which are pure white at first but then quickly turn brown. These nymphs shed their skin a number of times, growing larger each time, and the adult cockroach emerges three to six months later.

Adult cockroaches are not active during the day but they look for food and water at night.

Cockroaches feed on any form of organic material, including human waste.



**German cockroach**  
(not actual size)



**Oriental cockroach**  
(not actual size)

As they need water, during the day they normally hide in the area around taps, sinks, drains and other water sources.

The Oriental cockroach is also very common in Britain, mainly in heated buildings. It is often associated with hospitals, hotels, restaurants, prisons and blocks of flats. It is sometimes found outdoors around dustbins and rubbish tips.

The Oriental cockroach is 17 to 30 millimetres long, dark brown to black, very shiny, and with a flattened body and a long flexible antennae. They cannot fly or climb smooth surfaces, but they can move very quickly.

The female Oriental cockroach can lay up to five dark-brown egg cases, each containing up to 18 eggs.

These eggs take several weeks to develop and hatch as nymphs. The nymphs go through up to 10 stages before becoming adults.

Adult Oriental cockroaches normally hide by day and look for food at night. They feed on any organic matter, including human waste, soap, candles, paper and so on.

**Both species of cockroach can carry and spread diseases. If you discover a cockroach, you should take action as soon as possible**

## **How are cockroaches treated, and where can I get help?**

Treatment usually consists of using gel which kills the adult. Cockroaches are cannibals, so they eat the poisoned dead bodies and are poisoned themselves.

For treatment to be successful, areas such as the kitchen must be spotlessly clean so that there is nothing for cockroaches to eat other than dead bodies.

Cockroaches' favourite hiding place is behind fridges, as they like the heat from the motor. So, it is important to move the fridge and freezer and clean behind them, before the treatment.

**We no longer provide a pest-control service,** but you can find a list of local accredited pest control contractors by using the directory on the British Pest Control Associations (BPCA) website at [www.bpca.org.uk](http://www.bpca.org.uk) or phone **01332 294288**.

Or you can find a list of contractors in directories like the Yellow Pages, or by searching online.

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**01702 318111**