

## COCKROACHES

Cockroaches are among the most common insects. Based on fossil evidence, cockroaches are known to have been present on Earth for over 300 million years. Their sizes vary considerably; some species are up to several inches long. Some biologists consider insects to be one of the most successful groups of animals to ever inhabit this planet, and cockroaches are one of the most adaptable and successful insect groups. They have been able to survive many changing environments over millions of years. There are approximately 3500 species of cockroaches worldwide - about 55 species are found in the United States. Their presence in nearly every part of the world and wide range of habitats demonstrates that cockroaches are truly an outstanding success story in nature. Unfortunately, many of the said outstanding biological characteristics which makes them so successful, also makes them one of the most difficult pests to manage. Cockroaches, especially the German cockroach, are the most common encountered and important household insect pests in much of the U.S.

Cockroaches produce odorous secretions from various points in their bodies which can affect the flavor of various foods. When cockroach populations are high, these secretions may result in characteristic odor in the general region of the infestation. Disease-producing organisms such as bacteria have been found in cockroach bodies. Although several digestive diseases have been transmitted experimentally, different forms of gastroenteritis appear to be the principal diseases transmitted by cockroaches. These include food poisoning, dysentery, diarrhea, and other illnesses. The organisms causing these diseases are carried on the legs and bodies of cockroaches, and are deposited on food and utensils as cockroaches forage. They also carry a wide variety of protozoans and on microorganisms inside their bodies, some of which may occasionally be involved in the spread of disease. Cockroach excrement and cast skins also contain a number of allergens, to which many people exhibit allergic responses such as skin rashes, watery eyes and sneezing. For the most part, however, cockroaches usually are not associated with severe illnesses or disease outbreaks.

Only a few of the cockroach species found in the United States routinely enter and infest our dwellings. The most common of these are the German cockroach, American cockroach, Oriental cockroach, Brown-banded cockroach, field cockroach and the Asian cockroach. Of these eight species, the first five represent 95% of all cockroach management in and around buildings. In some parts of the U.S., one species may be more important than another. Certain other species may infest homes or other buildings, but will generally be found in very localized situations or under other unusual circumstances.



Cockroaches have the potential to transmit disease not only by walking on any food you are about to eat but also by walking on utensils used to prepare food. With this knowledge, we believe it is unacceptable for any restaurant, café, food producer, landlord, or private dwelling to allow cockroaches to be present.