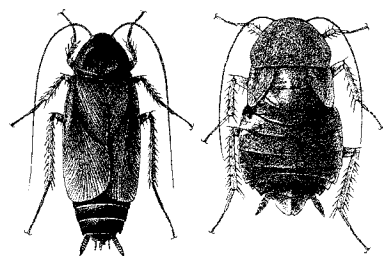


See a Roach? Identify it Before you Spray

Two types of cockroaches seem to suddenly appear during the early summer months. Oriental cockroaches and wood roaches are easily confused, because they look somewhat similar. It is important to be able to identify them because, unlike oriental cockroaches that breed inside, wood roaches don't. Other than stepping on the offending wood roach, no controls are needed. Here's how you tell the difference between these two types of roach.

Oriental cockroaches

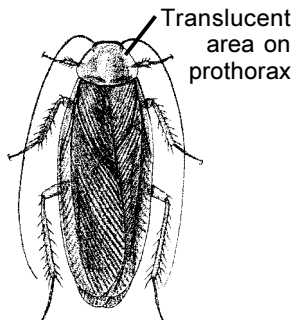


Oriental cockroach: male (left), female (right)

The adult oriental cockroach is about 1-1/2 inches long. The female is stout, shiny black and wingless. The male has short wings that do not cover the

abdomen. Male oriental roaches cannot fly—their body is too heavy and wings too short. These roaches can survive Nebraska winters outside—usually under bricks, mulch or in some kind of vegetative cover. Indoors, oriental roaches, (aka, "waterbugs") need a high moisture environment and are most often found in basements. If they are found in other parts of the house, it could indicate moisture problems, like leaky plumbing.

Wood cockroaches



Woods cockroach (male)

There are two different species of wood cockroaches that people find in this part of Nebraska. Adult males of the

larger species are about 1-3/4 inches in length; the smaller species is about one inch long. Male wood roaches are elongated and have wings that cover their abdomen. They are also good flyers. They are found inside because the males are attracted to house lights and squeeze through window frames. Wood cockroaches are associated with woodlots and live under bark of trees, but sometimes they live under wood shingles of houses. Female wood cockroaches cannot fly and are not often found inside homes. The key identifying feature is a translucent area on the outside edge of the thorax and along the outside edge of the wing.

Other Roaches

There are several other species of roach that can be found inside the house. For information about treating roaches, check out the Cockroach Control Manual on the web (<http://pested.unl.edu/cockcom.htm>) or purchase a copy at the Lancaster County Extension Office. (BPO)

Are Carpenter Ants Killing My Trees?

Lancaster County residents have many questions about the carpenter ants they find in and around their homes. A question commonly asked is whether carpenter ants are responsible for the declining health of a tree. In order to answer that question, let's start with the basics.

Carpenter Ants Do Not "Eat Wood"

Most people that contact the extension office believe carpenter ants "eat wood" like termites. This is a very common misconception about carpenter ants. Carpenter ants do not "eat wood." Carpenter ants eat plant material, insects (even termites) and other food they find out in the yard or in your home. So, if carpenter ants don't eat wood, why are they found in places where wood is damaged and hollowed out?

Carpenter ants find wood that is already damaged and starting to rot and use it as a place to live. They take advantage of the damaged wood because it has all the conditions necessary for the ants to have a successful nest site. Once they find the damaged wood, the ants begin building a nest. As the colony grows, they continue to scrape out more wood. That is why you sometimes find sawdust at the base of trees that have carpenter ant colonies in them. The ants don't need to eat the wood, just use the location as a place to live.

It is likely that every tree in



Samples of the black carpenter ant, *Camponotus pennsylvanicus*, are frequently brought to the Lancaster County Extension office for identification.

your yard is a potential site for carpenter ants to have a nest. Trees are naturally exposed to a number of conditions that can cause damage: age, disease, insects and the environment. When parts of the tree are damaged, the wood begins to rot and decay, making it very easy for the ants to scrape out. The nests usually remain in the rotted, decayed wood, but some nests may gradually grow big enough to extend into sound wood of the tree.

Carpenter Ants Are Only a Symptom

Carpenter ants in trees are not directly harmful to the tree. Control is not essential for the tree's health, since the ants are only taking advantage of something that is already happening to the tree. Without the original damage or disease, the carpenter ants would not have found a site suitable to build a nest in the first place.

Control in Trees

Control of carpenter ants inside trees is difficult but can be

done as a way to reduce the chance of ants moving to your home. Carpenter ant colonies located inside trees commonly form satellite colonies inside a nearby home wall or on a nearby roof. The control options available aren't going to permanently rid a tree of carpenter ants especially from a tree that is already in

decline. You may have to re-treat each year. Dust insecticides labeled for use on trees in the landscape are suggested for control. Apply the dust directly into the nest cavity.

Plugging or sealing tree cavities or treating tree wounds with wound dressings is not advised. Such treatments are unnecessary and will not eliminate or prevent decay or any future carpenter ant activity. Also, cutting down otherwise viable trees that happen to be infested with carpenter ants is generally not necessary.

You can reduce opportunities for carpenter ant nests in trees by keeping damaged limbs trimmed. If you have concerns about the health of a tree, contact a local arborist to have the tree evaluated.

Carpenter Ants and Your Home

Now that you have a better understanding of carpenter ants in trees, consider the "human home." What is your home? Basically a big, dead tree cut up
see CARPENTER ANTS on p. 11

Environmental Focus



EQIP Works With Producers to Conserve Natural Resources

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) was created as part of the 1996 Farm Bill to address environmental issues on farmlands and ranchlands. The program encourages environmental enhancement and stewardship by providing technical and financial assistance for eligible farmers and ranchers to deal with soil, water and natural resource concerns on their land.

Unlike the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), a large component of EQIP focuses on livestock issues, with 50 percent of funds being allocated specifically for livestock production. EQIP will pay up to 75 percent cost share for many practices that will benefit the environment and improve livestock production. These practices could include cross fencing, pasture

renovation, seeding, water management, equipment rental, and brush removal. Landowners may also apply for EQIP funds for wildlife habitat or structural problems (i.e. erosion, terracing) on their land.

According to Dennis Schroeder, NRCS District Conservationist, the recently signed 2002 Farm Bill will have an increase in funding for EQIP, which should result in a larger portion of applications being funded in Lancaster County.

Producers interested in the program should contact Dennis Schroeder at the NRCS office, 6030 S. 58 St., Suite C or call at 423-9683.

For general information about EQIP, you can visit the Natural Resource Conservation Service Web site at: www.nrcs.usda.gov (DS)

EPA Urges Caution When Using Disinfectants in Ducts

Businesses and homeowners considering having their heating ducts cleaned should be aware the products and processes involved have raised some concerns from the Environmental Protection Agency.

Contractors may recommend applying a sanitizer or disinfectant to prevent future mold growth following duct cleaning. However, the EPA cautions the antimicrobial agents used in this process may cause acute or long-term health effects.

While there are antimicrobial agents registered with EPA for use on hard surfaces such as sheet metal, few are registered for use in heating systems and duct work. Those that are registered have not had the extensive evaluation that the EPA now believes may be appropriate.

In a few cases, the antimicrobial agents sprayed into duct work has caused burning eyes, headaches, itchy skin, nausea or sore throats. It's not proven if the antimicrobial agents are effective.

Routine duct cleaning in the home is not recommended, according to the EPA. Contractors may raise the specter of

how dirty ducts can become after years of air flowing through them and the likelihood of mites or mold in the duct work, but it's never been shown conclusively that duct cleaning prevents health problems. It's also unlikely the dirt lining the duct will come back into the home.

Individuals may believe the ducts have mold or other biological contaminants in them. If mold is the reason you are considering duct cleaning, be sure to have the contractor show you any mold that exists. If you question whether it is mold, have a sample analyzed by a qualified laboratory.

Mold growth should be handled by identifying the cause of the mold growth and reducing the source of moisture to prevent further growth along with removal.

The publication "Should You Have the Air Ducts in Your Home Cleaned?" is available on the EPA Web site at www.epa.gov/iaq/pubs/airduct.html.

SOURCE: Shirley Niemeyer, NU Housing and Environment Specialist. (BPO)