

## See a Roach? Identify it before you treat!

People are calling the UNL Extension Office in Lancaster County about two types of cockroaches which they are seeing now. 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.** 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. (*photo right: oriental cockroaches*) 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 like the cool, humid conditions found in basements. If they are found in other parts of the house, it could indicate moisture problems, like leaky plumbing.

Eliminating moisture is a good way to make the environment less suitable for oriental cockroaches. Consider a dehumidifier to reduce humidity.

**Wood cockroaches.** There are two 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 1-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 often live under bark of dead trees and other moist locations. They may live under wood shingles. The female wood cockroach is wingless and rarely found. Wood roaches do not breed inside homes. The key identifying feature for wood roaches is a translucent area on the outside edge of the thorax and along the outside edge of the wing (*photo above – male wood cockroach*).



Because wood cockroaches do not breed inside houses, no treatment is necessary. Wood roaches are fairly easy to kill with a fly swatter or to step on. Flushing will also be effective. Consider drawing your drapes or shutting off lights in the evening to reduce the chance wood roaches will be attracted to the lights inside your home.

This article was written by Barb Ogg, Extension Educator, UNL Extension in Lancaster County. June 2008. For more information on cockroaches and other pests found around the home, visit <http://lancaster.unl.edu/pest>

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