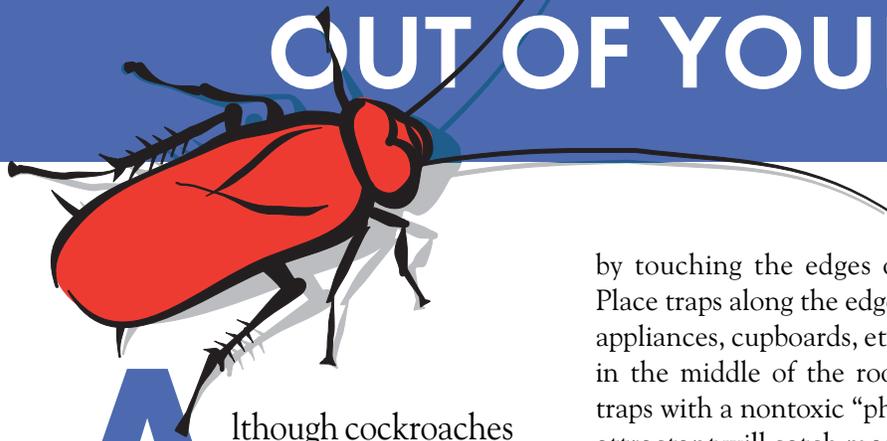


KEEPING COCKROACHES OUT OF YOUR HOUSE



Although cockroaches are useful outdoors, where they help recycle plant and animal wastes, they are not welcome indoors. Research clearly indicates that roaches can carry disease-causing organisms from sewers, garbage cans, or bathrooms to kitchen counters and human food. Cockroaches can also trigger allergic reactions in some people.

DETECTION

Except for size and markings, all cockroaches have a similar appearance. These insects are dark in color, oval-shaped, and have long antennae. Roaches are mainly active at night and generally remain hidden during the day in cracks and crevices near their source of food.

- **Use nontoxic sticky traps to locate roach habitat.** Roaches like to travel

by touching the edges of objects. Place traps along the edges of walls, appliances, cupboards, etc., and not in the middle of the room. Sticky traps with a nontoxic “pheromone” attractant will catch more roaches. When you find out where roaches are hiding, you’ll know where to concentrate your efforts.

LESS-TOXIC CONTROLS

- **Use sticky traps for small infestations.** If you only have a few roaches, you may be able to control the problem with sticky traps.
- **Use a strong vacuum with a crevice attachment** to pull roaches from their hiding places.
- **Use insecticidal dusts such as diatomaceous earth (DE) or boric acid** in wall voids or cracks and crevices before you seal them, under large appliances, or in other prime habitats. One way to gain access to a wall void is to remove the cover plates on electrical outlets and switches. **Always turn off the power before applying products near electrical outlets.**

When properly used, DE has little toxicity to humans and pets, but kills insects by absorbing their outer waxy coating, causing dehydration and

death. Use DE sold for pest control and *not* for pool filters.

Although boric acid has a low acute (immediate) toxicity for humans and pets, it should be handled carefully and kept out of the reach of children and pets. For roaches, boric acid is a slow-acting but effective stomach poison.

When applying these dusts, use a hand duster and wear a dust mask, gloves, and safety goggles. Apply a very light coating because roaches will avoid piles of dust.

- **Use cockroach baits** because they use minimal amounts of insecticide and confine the poison to a very small area (see Tips for Using Cockroach Baits on back).

PREVENTION

Prevent cockroach infestations by denying them access to your home and to the food, water, and shelter they need to survive.

- **Store food in the refrigerator or in containers that seal tightly.**
- **Keep things clean and tidy.** Thoroughly clean counters and vacuum or sweep floors daily in eating and food preparation areas. Don’t leave dirty dishes out overnight, even in the dishwasher. Any garbage con-



taining food scraps should be removed from the house nightly. Thoroughly clean recyclables before storing them. At night, place pet food and water bowls in a moat of soapy water. Reduce clutter in all rooms (it provides habitat for roaches).

- **Keep things dry.** Fix leaky plumbing. Keep kitchen surfaces dry whenever they are not in use, especially overnight.
- **Seal cracks and crevices.** Before sealing, vacuum and wash the area to eliminate all roach egg cases, fecal matter, or other debris. Caulk and paint cracks around baseboards, cupboards, pipes, sinks, etc. Use mildew-resistant caulk in moist areas.
- **Weatherstrip around doors and windows** and repair holes in screens.
- **Inspect materials you bring into your house** for roaches or their egg cases (small, dark, kidney bean shaped). Pay special attention to used furniture and appliances and cardboard cartons from food stores.
- **Monitor with sticky traps.** Once you have eliminated roaches or significantly reduced their numbers, continue to use sticky traps to alert you to a new infestation or a rise in the population. This is especially impor-

tant in apartment buildings, condominiums, or other connected dwellings where roaches can easily move from one household to another.

TIPS FOR USING COCKROACH BAITS

- Use baits indoors.
- Use baits with abamectin, or hydramethylnon.
- Reduce or eliminate food sources so roaches will feed on baits.
- If you are using a gel bait, put small dabs in a number of locations rather than large blobs in a few locations.
- Place baits near areas where roaches are hiding and between their hiding places and food sources.
- Place baits where roaches are most likely to travel or congregate, such as along the edges of walls, appliances, cupboards, etc. — *not* in the middle of the room.
- Always keep baits out of the reach of children and pets.
- Check bait stations frequently, especially if you have a large infestation. Empty bait stations should be removed because they make great roach hiding spots.

PRODUCTS

Examples of trade names for the products listed in this fact sheet:

Desiccating Dust: Grow More® Diatomaceous Earth, Safer® Ant & Crawling Insect Killer

Boric Acid Powder: Zap-A-Roach®, Roach Prufe®, Echols® Goodbye Roaches, Victor® Roach Killing Powder, M5® BoraPlus Roach Kill

Sticky Traps: Black Flag® Roach Motel, Echols® Water Bug & Roach Trap

Bait containing hydramethylnon: Combat® Roach Killing Gel, Combat® Source Kill Roach

Bait containing abamectin: Raid Max® Roach Bait

PESTICIDES AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Pesticides are designed to kill or repel undesired pests. However, many will also harm beneficial insects, birds, aquatic life, reptiles, pets, and even humans. Pesticides can potentially cause a wide variety of health effects in humans, and children face relatively higher risks from pesticide exposure than do adults exposed at the same levels. Recent research shows that common household pesticides show up in treated wastewater and wash off lawns and gardens. These pesticides end up contaminating bodies of water, including the Santa Monica Bay. This fact sheet is part of a series of information pieces aimed at educating Santa Monica area residents about less-toxic pest management techniques.

Pest control strategies and methods described in this publication are consistent with integrated pest management (IPM) concepts, and are based on scientific studies and tests in actual home and garden settings. Use suggested products according to label directions and dispose of unwanted or leftover pesticides at a household hazardous waste collection facility or event. No endorsement of specific brand name products is intended, nor is criticism implied of similar products that are not mentioned.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Bio-Integral Resource Center (BIRC)
(510) 524-2567

Santa Monica Environmental Programs Division
458-2255

www.santa-monica.org/environment

Free Disposal of Hazardous Products

Santa Monica residents only
Household Hazardous Waste Center
458-2113

L.A. County residents
1-888-CLEAN-LA

Fire ant infestations
1-888-434-7326

University of California IPM website
www.ipm.ucdavis.edu

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This fact sheet and the accompanying IPM outreach program was developed by Central Contra Costa Sanitary District with the following contributions:

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Choose less-toxic products for your home and garden.