

Discover the Fauna of Our Campus

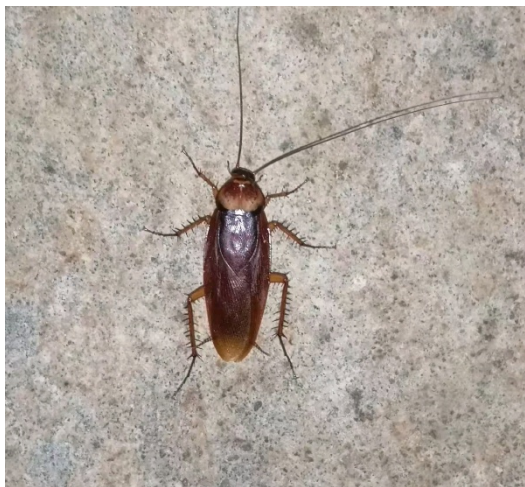
American Cockroach

Order: Cockroaches (Blattodea)

Family: Blattidae (True cockroaches)

Genus: *Periplaneta*

Species: American cockroach (*Periplaneta americana*)



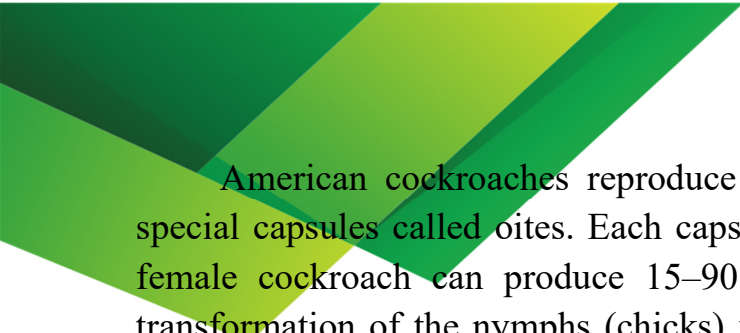
Sometimes popularly called simply “American Cockroach” or “Ship Cockroach” due to its size. Size: The largest cockroach species found in homes (up to 3–5 cm in length). It is bright reddish-brown in color. Unlike other species, it can fly short distances.

It usually prefers damp, dark and warm places (basements, sewer lines). In scientific literature, this group of insects is collectively called “Cockroaches”.

Contrary to its name, the American cockroach actually spread throughout the world through ship trade from Africa.

Adults are usually 35–50 mm long. It is bright reddish-brown in color. There is a yellowish stripe on the edges of the head (pronotum). Both males and females have wings. The wings of males are slightly longer than their bodies. Although they can fly, they usually do so at high temperatures and for short distances (like gliders). These insects are incredibly hardy creatures.

They hide in dark and cramped places during the day, and go out in search of food at night. They are omnivores (eat everything). They can feed on rotting food, paper, glue, hair and even soap. They love moisture. In cities, they mainly live in sewer systems, basements, bathrooms and kitchens.



American cockroaches reproduce very quickly. Females lay their eggs in special capsules called oites. Each capsule contains an average of 14–16 eggs. A female cockroach can produce 15–90 such capsules during her lifetime. The transformation of the nymphs (chicks) from the eggs into adults can take from 6 months to 2 years, depending on the ambient temperature.

These creatures create serious sanitary problems in human habitation. Since they walk in the sewers, they carry Salmonella, E. Coli and other pathogenic bacteria on their feet to food. Their excretions and shed skin residues can cause severe asthma and allergic reactions in humans.

Fighting the American cockroach requires a comprehensive approach: sealing gaps around pipes, preventing water leaks. Not leaving food residues in the open and emptying garbage cans in a timely manner. Gel poisons (bait) are considered the most effective means for this species, because when a poisoned cockroach returns to the nest, it poisons others. The American cockroach can live for about a week even after its head is cut off. It dies not from hunger, but from thirst, because it does not have a mouth and cannot drink water.

