

Order:

Blattodea – cockroaches

CLASSIFICATION
Kingdom: Animalia
Phylum: Arthropoda
Class: Insecta
Order: Blattodea
Family:
Subfamily:
Genus:
Species:

Currently there are over 4,000 species of Blattodea world-wide with over 450 species native to Australia.

The pest cockroaches found in the house belong to one of a dozen species which have been introduced into Australia. It is these few species that give all the rest a bad name. House cockroaches can transmit diseases that are harmful to humans. With but one or two exceptions, the native Australian species do not and cannot live alongside humans, since they are closely tied to particular kinds of habitats from which they cannot survive.

Cockroaches generally have flattened bodies, a thorax which is covered by a large plate that extends partly over the head. Some cockroach species grow up to 9 cm.

Most cockroaches are active at night, hiding during the day and coming out at night time to feed. Australian species are mostly found under rocks, logs or bark.

What do they eat? Pest species will eat just about anything, bush roaches feed on leaves, fungi, some are scavengers and others feed on pollen. Some specialised burrowing cockroaches harvest dry eucalypt leaves. The mouth parts of all species are adapted for chewing and they have strong, toothed mandibles.

Most cockroaches produce eggs held in an egg capsule (ootheca). Some species carry this egg capsule internally. The young nymphs resemble their parents.

Some of the smallest and some of the largest roaches can be found in Australia, from as small as 3 mm and up to larger species measuring 9cm.

ECOLOGICAL ROLE OF THE COCKROACH

SOIL HEALTH

assisting soil health, break down leaf litter and other detritus material

FOOD SOURCE

forming an abundant food source for other insects and animals

SCAVENGERS

help to keep the forest floor healthy and clean; recycle nutrients

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