

Argentine Ants



Linepithema humile

COLOR:	Dark brown to black; shiny
LEGS:	6
SHAPE:	Segmented; oval
SIZE:	1/16-1/4
ANTENNAE:	True
REGION:	

Argentine ant colonies can grow to monumental size. Their colony borders sometimes cover entire habitats. Argentine ant queens also assist with foraging for food. The ant gives off a musty odor when crushed. Worker argentine ants are about one sixteenth of an inch long. Queen argentine ants are one eighth of an inch to one quarter of an inch long.

Habits

Argentine ants deposit trails continuously, instead of just from nest to food source. This habit ensures they do not waste time visiting the same area for food. They prefer to eat sweets but they will eat almost anything including meats, eggs, oils and fats.

Habitat

Argentine ant colonies are located in wet environments near a food source.

Threats

Argentine ants do not pose a health threat, but they can contaminate food.

Prevention:

Eliminate standing water. Pests, such as Argentine ants are attracted to moisture. Keep tree branches and other plants cut back from the house. Sometimes pests use these branches to get into your home. Make sure that there are no cracks or little openings around the bottom of your house. Sometimes pests use these to get into your home. Make sure that firewood and building materials are not stored next to your home. Pests like to build nests in stacks of wood.



Carpenter Ants
Camponotus species

COLOR:	Varies depending on species, from red to black or a combination. The two most common species are black.
LEGS:	6
SHAPE:	Segmented; oval
SIZE:	5/8"
ANTENNAE:	True
REGION:	

Carpenter ants get their name because they excavate wood in order to build their nests. Their excavation results in smooth tunnels inside the wood. Carpenter ants range in size from one-quarter inch for a worker ant to up to three-quarters inch for a queen.

Habits

All species mainly attack wood that is or has been wet and damaged by mold. Even though these ants first invade wet, decayed wood, they may soon begin building paths through dry, undamaged wood. They usually come into buildings through cracks around doors, windows, or through holes for wires. They will also crawl along overhead wires, shrubs, or tree limbs that touch the building far above the ground.

Habitat

Carpenter ants build their nests outdoors in various wood sources, including tree stumps, firewood or landscaping. They need a constant water source to survive. They will enter homes through wet, damaged wood.

Threats

Carpenter ants damage wood through their nest building. If they gain entry to a structure, they pose a property threat.

Prevention:

Because carpenter ants require a water source, eliminate sources of moisture or standing water. Keep tree branches and other plants cut back from the house. Sometimes pests use these branches to get into your home. Make sure that there are no cracks or little openings around the bottom of your house. Sometimes pests use these to get into your home. Make sure that firewood and building materials are not stored next to your home. Pests like to build nests in stacks of wood.



Odorous House Ants
Tapinoma sessile

COLOR:	Brown or black
LEGS:	6
SHAPE:	Segmented; oval
SIZE:	1/16-1/8
ANTENNAE:	True
REGION:	

This ant gets its name from the strong, rotten coconut-like smell it gives off when crushed. These tiny insects range in size from one-sixteenth of an inch to one-eighth of an inch long.

Habits

Odorous house ants like to eat sweets, especially melon.

Habitat

Typically living for several years, these ants make their homes in exposed soil and wall cracks.

Threats

These ants do not pose a public health risk, but they can contaminate food and should be avoided.

Prevention:

Eliminate standing water. Pests such as odorous house ants are attracted to moisture. Keep tree branches and other plants cut back from the house. Sometimes pests use these branches to get into your home. Make sure that there are no cracks or little openings around the bottom of your house. Sometimes pests use these to get into your home. Make sure that firewood and building materials are not stored next to your home. Pests like to build nests in stacks of wood.



Pavement Ants
Tetramorium caespitum

COLOR:	Dark brown to blackish
LEGS:	6
SHAPE:	Segmented; oval
SIZE:	1/8"
ANTENNAE:	True
REGION:	

Pavement ants get their name because they make their nests in or under cracks in pavement. They can infest structures.

Habits

These ants will eat almost anything, including insects, seeds, honeydew, honey, bread, meats, nuts and cheese.

Habitat

These ants live in or under pavement cracks.

Threats

These ants do not pose a public health risk, but they can contaminate food and should be avoided.

Prevention:

Eliminate standing water. Pests, such as ants, are attracted to moisture. Keep tree branches and other plants cut back from the house. Sometimes pests use these branches to get into your home.* Make sure that there are no cracks or little openings around your house. Sometimes pests use these to get into your home. Make sure that firewood and building materials are not stored next to your home. Pests like to build nests in stacks of wood.



Red Imported Fire Ants
Solenopsis invicta

COLOR:	Dark reddish brown
LEGS:	6
SHAPE:	Segmented; oval
SIZE:	1/8-3/8
ANTENNAE:	True
REGION:	

Red imported fire ants nest in soil and build mound nests. They can infest garages.

Habits

These ants will build large mound nests, and will sting humans who come across a nest.

Habitat

Red imported fire ants will build their nest mounds outdoors in landscape areas or near a structural foundation. The ant will gain entry to a building through holes or cracks.

Threats

The sting of a red imported fire ant is painful and often results in a raised welt that becomes a white pustule. Often, a person stung by a red imported fire ant receives multiple painful stings from more than one of the ants. Persons allergic to insect stings will react more severely.

Prevention:

Red imported fire ants and their telltale mound nests should be actively avoided. To prevent entry into a structure, seal all internal and external cracks and crevices.



German Cockroaches

Blattella germanica

COLOR:	It can be tan through brown to almost black, and has two dark parallel streaks running from the head to the base of the wings
LEGS:	6
SHAPE:	Oval
SIZE:	2"
ANTENNAE:	True
REGION:	

The German cockroach is one of the most common and prominent household cockroaches in the world

Habits

German cockroaches are particularly found of restaurants, food processing areas, hotels and nursing homes. They are active when the temperature is 70 degrees or higher, but they can survive lower temperatures with the right conditions.

Habitat

German cockroaches are often found in cracks and crevasses where they breed.

Threats

Cockroaches have been reported to spread at least 33 kinds of bacteria, six kinds of parasitic worms, and at least seven other kinds of human pathogens. They can pick up germs on the spines of their legs and bodies as they crawl through decaying matter or sewage and then carry these into food or onto food surfaces. Germs that cockroaches eat from decaying matter or sewage are protected while in their bodies and may remain infective for several weeks longer than if they had been exposed to cleaning agents, rinse water, or just sunlight and air. Recent medical studies have shown that cockroach allergens cause lots of allergic reactions in inner city children. They were even shown to cause asthma in children. These allergens build up in deposits of droppings, secretions, cast skins, and dead bodies of roaches.

Prevention:

Good sanitation and habitat reduction, along with vacuuming, surveillance, a baiting program, and some sealing of cracks can usually quickly reduce or eliminate a cockroach population.



American Cockroaches *Periplaneta americana* (L.)

COLOR:	Reddish brown, with a yellowish figure 8 pattern on the back of the head
LEGS:	6
SHAPE:	Oval
SIZE:	2"
ANTENNAE:	True
REGION:	

The American cockroach is the largest of the house-infesting cockroach.

Habits

American cockroaches are found in food processing areas and food storage areas, as well as other types of buildings. They are active when the temperature is 70 degrees or higher, but they can survive lower temperatures with the right conditions.

Habitat

American cockroaches are often found in sewers and basements, particularly around pipes and drains.

Threats

Cockroaches have been reported to spread at least 33 kinds of bacteria, six kinds of parasitic worms, and at least seven other kinds of human pathogens. They can pick up germs on the spines of their legs and bodies as they crawl through decaying matter or sewage and then carry these into food or onto food surfaces. Germs that cockroaches eat from decaying matter or sewage are protected while in their bodies and may remain infective for several weeks longer than if they had been exposed to cleaning agents, rinse water, or just sunlight and air. Recent medical studies have shown that cockroach allergens cause lots of allergic reactions in inner city children. They were even shown to cause asthma in children. These allergens build up in deposits of droppings, secretions, cast skins, and dead bodies of roaches.

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Brownbanded Cockroaches

Supella longipalpa

COLOR:	Brown, with pronounced banding across wings
LEGS:	6
SHAPE:	Oval
SIZE:	1/2"
ANTENNAE:	True
REGION:	

Brown banded cockroaches get their name from the two lighter bands they have across their dark brownish bodies. In addition to the distinctive banding, males have full wings, which reach beyond the tip of their rather pointed abdomens, but females have underdeveloped wings, much shorter than their broad, rounded abdomens. The lighter band markings are much more distinct in nymphs than in adults of either sex.

Habits

Male brownbanded cockroaches have been observed to fly indoors. Among cockroach species, brownbanded cockroaches have the most distinctions between sexes. Females have larger abdomen and shorter wings than males. Brownbanded cockroaches often hide their egg cases in or under furniture.

Habitat

Within a room, these roaches tend to prefer warmer, drier, and higher locations than do any of the other urban pest roaches. They are often found in upper cabinets or in other rooms than the kitchens (food preparation areas) or bathrooms.

Threats

Cockroaches have been reported to spread at least 33 kinds of bacteria, six kinds of parasitic worms, and at least seven other kinds of human pathogens. They can pick up germs on the spines of their legs and bodies as they crawl through

decaying matter or sewage and then carry these into food or onto food surfaces. Germs that cockroaches eat from decaying matter or sewage are protected while in their bodies and may remain infective for several weeks longer than if they had been exposed to cleaning agents, rinse water, or just sunlight and air. Recent medical studies have shown that cockroach allergens cause lots of allergic reactions in inner city children. They were even shown to cause asthma in children. These allergens build up in deposits of droppings, secretions, cast skins, and dead bodies of roaches.

Prevention:

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Oriental Cockroaches

Blatta orientalis

COLOR:	Dark brown, almost black
LEGS:	6
SHAPE:	Oval
SIZE:	1"
ANTENNAE:	True
REGION:	

Oriental Cockroaches, *Blatta orientalis* (L.), are large very dark (almost black, but sometimes dark reddish-brown), shiny cockroaches which live in sewers and similar wet, decaying organic matter. They are sometimes called “water bugs” because they come out of drains, and “black beetle cockroaches” because of their smooth, dark bodies. Males are about 1 inch long, with wings that cover only about 3/4 of their abdomen; females are about 1 1/4 inch long, and have only short stubs of wing pads.

Habits

This species of cockroach often travels through sewer pipes. It survives on filth and enjoys temperatures from 68 to 84 degrees. This is a cooler temperature than that preferred by other cockroach species.

Habitat

Oriental cockroaches are often found in sewers and will enter structures through drains. They find indoor harborage in basements and crawl spaces. They can also be found in leaf piles and firewood outdoors.

Threats

Cockroaches have been reported to spread at least 33 kinds of bacteria, six kinds of parasitic worms, and at least seven other kinds of human pathogens. They can pick up germs on the spines of their legs and bodies as they crawl through decaying matter or sewage and then carry these into food or onto food surfaces. Germs that cockroaches eat from decaying matter or sewage are protected while in their bodies and may remain infective for several weeks longer than if they had been exposed to cleaning agents, rinse water, or just sunlight and air. Recent medical studies have shown that cockroach allergens cause lots of allergic reactions in inner city children. They were even shown to cause asthma in children. These allergens build up in deposits of droppings, secretions, cast skins, and dead bodies of roaches.

Prevention:

Good sanitation and habitat reduction, along with vacuuming, surveillance, a baiting program, and some sealing of cracks can usually quickly reduce or eliminate a cockroach population.



House Mice

Mus domesticus

COLOR:	Light brown to black
LEGS:	4
SHAPE:	Round
SIZE:	2"
ANTENNAE:	False
REGION:	

The house mouse is the most common rodent pest in most parts of the world. It can breed rapidly and adapt quickly to changing conditions.

Habits

House mice can breed throughout the year and can share nests.

Habitat

House mice live in structures, but they can live outdoors.

Threats

Micro droplets of mouse urine can cause allergies in children. Mice can also bring fleas, mites, ticks and lice into your home.

Prevention:

To keep mice and other rodents out, make sure all holes of larger diameter than a pencil are sealed. Mice can squeeze through spaces as small as a nickel. Seal any cracks and voids. Don't overlook proper drainage at the foundation and always install gutters or diverts which will channel water away from the building.



Subterranean Termites

Family Rhinotermitidae

COLOR:	Creamy brown
LEGS:	6
SHAPE:	Long, narrow, oval
SIZE:	1/8
ANTENNAE:	True
REGION:	

Subterranean termites live in underground colonies or in moist secluded areas aboveground that can contain up to 2 million members. They build distinctive "mud tubes" to gain access to food sources and to protect themselves from open air. Termite colonies are organized into castes depending on tasks -- workers, soldiers and reproductives. The characteristics of a subterranean termite are dependent on the termite's role in the colony. Cream-colored Worker subterranean termites are 1/8 to 3/8's of an inch in length. Soldier subterranean termites are of a similar body length, but are distinguished by their powerful mandibles. Soldier termites have cream-colored bodies and brown heads. Reproductive subterranean termites are approximately one inch long.

Habits

Subterranean termites live underground and build tunnels, referred to as mud tubes, to reach food sources. Like other termite species, they feed on products containing cellulose. Subterranean termites swarm in the spring -- groups of reproductive termites go off to start new colonies.

Habitat

Subterranean termites need contact with the soil to survive and live underground. They can build tunnels through cracks in concrete.

Threats

Subterranean termites are by far the most destructive species. They can collapse a building entirely, meaning possible financial ruin for a homeowner. The hard, saw-toothed jaws of termites work like shears and are able to bite off extremely small fragments of wood, one piece at a time.

Prevention:

Avoid water accumulation near your home's foundation. Divert water away with properly functioning downspouts, gutters and splash blocks. Reduce humidity in crawl spaces with proper ventilation. Never bury wood scraps or waste lumber in the yard. Most importantly, eliminate wood contact with the soil. Maintain a one-inch gap between the soil and wood portions of the building.



Flea

Siphonaptera

COLOR:	Dark reddish-brown
LEGS:	6
SHAPE:	Flat
SIZE:	1/12 to 1/6-inch long
ANTENNAE:	True
REGION:	

Fleas are parasites that feed on the blood of any warm-blooded body. The most common species is the cat flea, which often feasts on cats, dogs and humans.

Habits

Fleas transport themselves on rodents and other mammals. They infest both household pests and wild animals. Fleas use their powerful legs to jump as high as 8 inches vertically and 16 inches horizontally.

Habitat

Fleas usually remain on their warm-blooded hosts at all times. They can also be found on shoes, pant legs, or blankets, which can transfer the fleas to new environments. They are often found infesting opossums, raccoons, and skunks in urban settings.

Threats

Fleas are the most common transmitter of the rare Bubonic Plague. They also transmit the bacterial disease murine typhus to humans through infected rats. Their saliva can cause serious Flea Allergy Dermatitis in pets, and their debris has been reported to cause similar allergic reactions in humans. Fleas can also transfer tapeworms and cause anemia in pets. Flea bites commonly cause painful, itchy red bumps.

Prevention:

Clean and vacuum frequently to help remove flea populations and prevent the laying of eggs. Keep your lawn groomed to avoid rodent habitation. Protect pets by keeping them on a leash when outside, bathing and grooming pets regularly, visiting a veterinarian annually, and using flea treatments according to direction. It is important to hire a pest professional to rid your home of rodents and fleas.

Yellowjackets

Vespula spp.

COLOR:	Abdomen usually black and yellow patterned similar to bands
LEGS:	Six
SHAPE:	Wasp-like
SIZE:	Workers 3/8 to 5/8 of an inch
ANTENNAE:	True
REGION:	

There are several species of yellowjackets. These flying insects typically have a yellow and black head/face and patterned abdomen. Many say, the pattern resembles stripes. Signature to species, the abdomen pattern can help an entomologist or pest professional identify specific types of yellowjackets.

Habits

Yellowjackets nest in the ground or in cavernous areas such as eaves, attics, etc.... They feed on sweets and proteins and commonly invade outdoor activities.

Habitat

Yellowjackets can be found anywhere humans can be found. Check near recycling bins or other areas where sugars are common but keep in mind these pests also feed on protein. Yellowjackets become more aggressive in autumn when the colony begins to die out except for the queen.

Threats

Yellowjackets pose significant health threats to humans as they may sting repeatedly and can cause allergic reactions. Stinging insects send over 500,000 people to the emergency room each year.

Prevention:

Remain vigilant and call a pest professional if you suspect yellowjacket activity. Control requires specialized equipment and safety precautions. Do not leave sweet drinks or meats in accessible areas. For example, clean up and remove food and trash after picnics and outdoor events.



Indian Meal Moths

Plodia interpunctella

COLOR:	Copper reddish coloring on outer part of wings
LEGS:	6
SHAPE:	Elongated oval
SIZE:	5/8"
ANTENNAE:	True

REGION:	
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The indianmeal moth was given its name after an insect scientist found it feeding on corn meal, also known as Indian meal. From wing tip to wing tip, adult moths measure from five-eighths of an inch to three-fourths of an inch long.

Habits

These moths like to feed on dried fruits, grains, seeds, nuts, chocolate, candies, bird seed, dog food, powdered milk, dried red peppers and candy.

Habitat

Attracted to the light, these bugs are found worldwide in areas where food is stored, such as grocery stores.

Threats

Indian Meal Moths infest foods and can contaminate food products.

Prevention:

Dried food products should be inspected thoroughly for signs of moth infestations. Discard infested foods in outdoor trash bins. Clean infested cupboards thoroughly with a vacuum and soap and water. Store food in sealed containers.



Merchant Grain Beetles

Anobiid and Lyctus species

COLOR:	Brown
LEGS:	6
SHAPE:	Narrow oval
SIZE:	1/10

ANTENNAE:	True
REGION:	

Merchant grain beetles are typically not found in grain products, but instead like to attack cereals, cake mixes, macaroni, cookies and chocolate. Merchant grain beetles are dark brown and have six saw-like teeth on each side of their bodies. They can grow to be one-eighth of an inch long and have very flat bodies.

Habits

The merchant grain beetle's body shape allows it to crawl into packaging to eat, live and have babies.

Habitat

Merchant grain beetles are found in pantries or in food processing areas or warehouses.

Threats

Merchant grain beetles can infest stored food products and can contaminate food.

Prevention:

Discard infested packages. Clean spilled grain and food sources.



Black Widow Spiders

Lactrodectus mactans

COLOR:	Black, with characteristic red "hourglass" on back
LEGS:	8
SHAPE:	Round
SIZE:	3/4" length; 3/8" in diameter
ANTENNAE:	False
REGION:	

Black widow spiders are most recognized for the red hourglass shape on the back. Contrary to legend, female black widow spiders rarely devour the male black widow spider after mating.

Habits

Black widow spiders spin their webs near ground level. They often build their webs in protected areas, such as in boxes and in firewood.

Habitat

Black widow spiders are often found around wood piles and gain entry into a structure when firewood is carried into a building. They are also found under eaves, in boxes, and other areas where they are undisturbed.

Threats

The venom of a black widow spider is a neurotoxin and is used as a defense. Black widow spiders do not bite humans instinctively. The black widow spider bite can cause severe pain. Young children and the elderly are especially susceptible to a severe reaction to a black widow spider bite.

Prevention:

Avoid black widow spider bites by wearing heavy gloves when moving items that have been stored for a long period of time. Spiders often hide in shoes, so check shoes and shake them out before wearing. When spider webs are visible, use caution before putting your hands or feet in that area.



Brown Recluse Spiders

Loxosceles reclusa

COLOR:	Light to dark brown, with characteristic dark brown violin marking on back
LEGS:	8
SHAPE:	Round
SIZE:	5/8"
ANTENNAE:	False
REGION:	

Brown recluse spiders have a characteristic dark brown violin marking on their back.

Habits

Brown recluse spiders are nocturnal and eat other bugs like cockroaches and crickets. Male brown recluse spiders wander farther than females and will crawl into shoes or other clothing.

Habitat

Brown recluse spiders often live outdoors in debris and wood piles. They can be found indoors in storage areas and dark recesses.

Threats

Like the black widow spider, the brown recluse spider bites in defense and does not bite humans instinctively. They will bite humans when the clothing they are hiding in is worn. The brown recluse spider bite is painful and can produce an open, ulcerating sore.

Prevention:

To avoid brown recluse spiders, avoid keeping clothing on the floor. Store clothing and shoes inside plastic containers, and shake out all clothing that has been in a hamper before wearing or washing.



Carpenter Bees

Xylocopa species

COLOR:	Blue-black, green or purple metallic sheen on abdomen
LEGS:	6
SHAPE:	Oval; bee shape
SIZE:	1
ANTENNAE:	True
REGION:	

Carpenter bees look like typical bumblebees but often lack yellow stripes. They are solitary bees.

Habits

Unlike bumble bees, carpenter bees are solitary insects. Female carpenter bees will chew a tunnel into a piece of wood to build a nest gallery. The bits of wood she chews and deposits outside the nest are called frass. The male carpenter bee guards the outside of the nest. He does not have a stinger, but his constant buzzing causes concern for some.

Habitat

Carpenter bees bore through soft woods to lay eggs and protect their larvae as they develop.

Threats

Carpenter bees do not pose a public health threat, but they can damage wood through their nest building.

Prevention:

Carpenter bees prefer bare wood, so painting and staining wood can sometimes deter them. However, they will sometimes attack stained or painted wood, so contact a pest control professional for assistance.