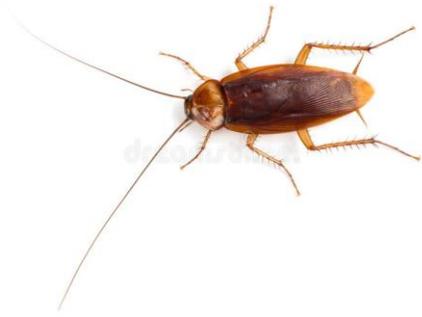




Western Pennsylvania basement bugs and pests



American Cockroach (a.k.a. waterbug)

The American cockroach has the largest body size of all common cockroach species, growing up to 3 inches long. They have wings and both the male and the female can fly as adults. The adults are reddish brown or mahogany colored, with a yellow band behind their heads.

American cockroaches are most often found in the kitchen, bathroom, basement - areas where food, water or moisture is available. Cockroaches may enter houses through sewer connections, under doors, or around plumbing, air ducts, or other openings in the foundation. In colder climates, these insects move indoors seeking shelter from the cold, food and water, but are often carrier into the home from outside.

They feed on a variety of materials including cheeses, leather, starch in book bindings and dead or fermenting food, even dead or wounded cockroaches

Cockroaches are known to spread disease, contaminate food and cause allergies and even asthma. Cockroaches can pick up germs on their legs and bodies as they crawl transferring these germs to food or onto food surfaces. The World Health Organization (WHO), states that they are proven or suspected carriers of the organisms causing diarrhea, dysentery, cholera, leprosy, plague, typhoid fever and viral diseases such as poliomyelitis.



Black Carpet Beetle

The black carpet beetle is 1/4 to 1/2 inch long. Their main body and heads are black, and the head is often partially concealed from above. Their wings are brownish black. These beetles begin their lives white but darken with age.

They are most often found in carpets, especially those of higher pile or fiber content, around baseboards and other areas. They like to hide in cracks and crevices;

They feed on leather, silk, wool, feathers and hair. Black carpet beetles may also consume dried meat, plants and dead insects. The larvae eat almost any animal product, including leather, wool, silk, feathers, and hair.

Carpet beetles can be an annoyance in your home. They can also sometimes cause an allergic reaction. They can also sometimes cause an allergic reaction. However, they don't bite and don't otherwise pose any danger to humans.



Booklice

Booklice are relatively tiny insects which resemble lice in size and shape but only feed on fungi, molds, or materials that support mold growth, as well as the starchy paste of wallpaper and book bindings. They generally have very small wings or no wings at all when living indoors.

They like to live in warm, moist places that are poorly ventilated. these items. Damp or moist cardboard and water leaks often attract these pests. Large populations usually indicate an underlying mold or moisture problem. It is important to make a careful inspection to find source of the moisture.

While they often have chewing mouthparts, but they do not harm people or pets. When they invade kitchens, they can contaminate open packages of food.



Brown-Banded Cockroach

The brown-banded cockroach is one of the smallest of the invasive cockroaches, generally reaching about ½ inch in size. They gain their name from the brown bands that are present on their wings.

The brown-banded cockroach needs less moisture than other species, so they tend to be throughout the home. They can multiply quickly and infest an entire building or structure quickly. They feed on almost anything from trash and food to fabrics and paper. They are generally unseen during daylight, since they avoid light.

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Carpenter Ant

Carpenter ants are one of the largest of all the ant species. Carpenter ants within a single colony may vary in size. Adult carpenter ants can measure from 1/4 to over 1/2 inch in length. The most common color is black, but some can have reddish or yellowish coloration. The color also varies among species, ranging from jet-black to red, or light brown. Some ants can have both red and black coloration.

Carpenter ants mainly live outside, but they can also establish their nests inside of homes and buildings where moist, wet or damaged wood is found. While they do not “eat” wood as termites do, they will build their nests in the damaged wood and may cut channels or pathways through it to gain access to their nests. They are commonly found in wet or moist structural wood.

They enjoy sweets and meats and will also feed on other insects. The workers are wingless, are attracted to moisture and invade homes in search of food.

Adult carpenter ants are able to bite. While they typically will not bite humans, they will bite if defending themselves, which can be painful or leave a burning sensation. While they don't generally carry disease, they can cause damage to your home and can be persistent visitors if the conditions are right.



European Earwig

The earwig gains its name from folk tales. While they are odd looking insects which have intimidating looking pincers protruding from the abdomen, they do not tunnel into human ears or brains, nor are they poisonous. Their pincers are somewhat intimidating looking, but they are not poisonous. They can, however, deliver a mild pinch. Earwigs are 5/8-inch long and dark reddish brown. They have two pairs of wings which fold inward and are rarely used.

Generally speaking, earwigs move into homes to find food or because of a change in weather. They prefer cool, damp areas making basements a perfect place to live and hide. They normally hide in dark places like cracks and crevices during the day and forage for food at night.

Earwigs tend to feed on decaying materials, especially vegetation and products which are comprised on vegetable matter. They can attack plants to the point where they can render them severely damaged or unproductive.

While the folk tales abound, the earwig poses very little in the way of health threats to humans,



House Crickets

You can identify house crickets can by their light brown color and the three dark bands across their heads. They are generally about 3/4 of an inch in length, with black legs, long antennae, and wings.

While most crickets tend to live outside, house crickets will search for shelter when temperatures begin to drop. They are mainly attracted to damp, dark areas which is why the basement is an ideal home for them. Once inside, they tend feed on wool, silk, and other fabrics, and also will feed on pet food, fruit, and vegetables

While crickets aren't generally known to be harmful or dangerous to humans, they can bite. Their loud chirping (the males do this to attract partners), particularly at night can be a huge nuisance. They can carry diseases like E.coli and salmonella in their bodies and are also capable of carrying worms that can come out in their feces.



German Cockroach

The German cockroach is the most common cockroach in homes. They are recognized by their light brown color with black stripes behind the head. They generally grow to a little over ½ inch in length. The adults do have wings, but unlike the Asian cockroach, it will rarely fly.

Areas where food or food debris is left available provide a home for the German cockroach, as it needs food, water, and protection. They are attracted to meats, sugars, and fatty foods, and may also eat soap, glue, and toothpaste. They will also turn on each other when food is scarce.

They do secrete “odors” and when populations are high, it may be possible to detect what to many seems to be a “musty” odor.

Cockroaches are known to spread disease, contaminate food and cause allergies and even asthma. Cockroaches can pick up germs on their legs and bodies as they crawl transferring these germs to food or onto food surfaces. The World Health Organization (WHO), states that they are proven or suspected carriers of the organisms causing diarrhea, dysentery, cholera, leprosy, plague, typhoid fever and viral diseases such as poliomyelitis.



House Centipede

The house centipede cannot survive winter conditions outdoors in Pennsylvania but it can be a formidable nuisance, entering the home through cracks and crevices. They are generally long and flat (about 1-1/2 inches) and have fifteen pairs of legs with the last pair (on adult females) nearly twice the length of the body. The body is a yellowish-brown with three dark stripes running along the top of the body.

House centipedes prefer moist, damp and dark areas. As a result, homes with moisture problems can attract these pests. We most often see them in basements, closets, or bathrooms. They like to eat insects that are in the same areas.

They feed on a wide range of smaller insects like silverfish, cockroaches, carpet beetles, and spiders. When there is an abundance of these insects, it generally points to an underlying problem with one or more of the insects they like as food sources.

Centipede bites are rare but can happen if they are protecting themselves. Generally they do not break the skin, and a rare bite normally causes only slight pain and swelling, unless there is an underlying issue or allergy.



Mice

Mice tend to enter homes through cracks, holes and openings in walls, floors and foundations. They dig, climb and can squeeze through a hole about the size of a dime. The general “rule” is that if a mouse can get its head through an opening, it can squeeze the remainder of the body through as well.

Mice enter the home in search of primary needs such as food, shelter and moisture. They generally live near food sources and construct their nests from soft materials like insulation, bedding materials, clothing, etc. Once inside they set up a nest and often never return outside as long as the surrounding remain safe, warm and friendly.

Signs that you have mice in your home include trails of mice droppings or feces, clothing and other soft materials being disturbed or chewed, holes chewed into food boxes and containers and potentially even holes chewed through wires.

House mice may eat their own feces to acquire nutrients produced by bacteria in their intestines. While the common house mouse is not as dangerous to your health as deer mice, they can still spread disease, such as hantavirus, salmonella and listeria through their droppings and urines.



Moisture Ants

Moisture ants are generally between 1/8 and 1/4 inch long and are yellowish in color. If you crush or step on them, they often give off a “citronella” or “lemon” scent.

These ants thrive in damp environments and are attracted to sweets and decaying or damaged wood. If there is an entry point and a source of moisture inside the home, they start building homes. These ants need a continuous source of moisture to survive.

They often mimic termite behavior when they enter a home can eat anything that is already moist or decaying due to moisture, such as wood, and furniture. They do not feed on fresh wood, but unlike carpenter ants will feed on moisture on a structure and parts of a wooden structure that is damaged or rotted due to that moisture.

Like any ant, moisture ants in theory can be a danger to your health because they can carry harmful bacteria and also transport disease causing organisms.



Oriental Cockroach

The oriental cockroach is a large species of cockroach, with fully grown specimens often being over 1 inch. The males are generally black or dark brown in color with a glossy body and longer wings. The female has a wider body than the male with wings just below her head. Both have black stripes behind their head. Neither male nor female fly. They are often found in basements, kitchens and pantries.

Oriental cockroaches will eat almost anything, including decaying organic matter and trash. They often live in rarely used sink drains, garbage disposals, under cabinets that contain plumbing or in bathroom voids. As they forage for food in homes, the pests may transfer disease-causing bacteria to pantry goods and countertops.

They do secrete “odors” and when populations are high, it may be possible to detect what to many seems to be a “musty” odor.

Cockroaches are known to spread disease, contaminate food and cause allergies and even asthma. Cockroaches can pick up germs on their legs and bodies as they crawl transferring these germs to food or onto food surfaces. The World Health Organization (WHO), states that they are proven or suspected carriers of the organisms causing diarrhea, dysentery, cholera, leprosy, plague, typhoid fever and viral diseases such as poliomyelitis.



Rolly-Pollys (a.k.a. pillbugs and sowbugs)

Sowbugs or pillbugs are actually not really insects at all. They are actually related to crayfish. Most often they are dark brown, black or gray and, have small antennae and are about $\frac{3}{4}$ inch in length. Pillbugs can roll up into a “ball” when disturbed, sowbugs cannot.

Outdoors sowbugs and pillbugs live and breed in areas rich in moist, decaying material such as wet mulch, under firewood piles, etc. They can be found around and in buildings and enter through holes and cracks in the foundation or through poorly sealed door thresholds. Heavy moisture outside in the form of snow melt or heavy rainfall often drives them inside where homeowners find them in damp basements or bathrooms.

Neither pillbugs nor sowbug bite or sting and no harmful diseases are attributed to them.



Silverfish

Silverfish are gray or silver teardrop-shaped insects and have long frontal antennae with three long filaments extending from the abdomen.

They live in damp, dark areas such as basements, garages, sheds and even kitchens or bathrooms. They enter the home through holes and cracks in foundations, and gaps or cracks in doors. Silverfish are moisture-seeking pests and require high levels of humidity or moisture to survive. They are often found in storage boxes, paper or newspaper stacks and cardboard.

Silverfish like to eat sugars and starches, like paper, cardboard, glue in books, cloth, and damp clothing. They can be very destructive in their feeding habits, often consuming large portions of a food source, chewing holes into clothing, upholstery, stored files and books.

Silverfish “molt” or leave behind their skins as they grow and age. These skins can collect dust and attract dust, causing issues for people with dust allergies. They can bite, but their jaws aren’t considered strong enough to harm humans. Silverfish are not generally known to carry pathogens harmful to humans.



Spiders

There are too many varieties of spiders to list them all here.

Spiders may live anywhere in a home, but it is common to find them in dark, musty basements, cluttered rooms, closets, attics or other rarely used spaces that provide them with a level of warmth, protection from harm and a good source of food. They can enter a home through holes or cracks in foundations, windows or small holes in walls or floors.

When spiders are present, other insects are as well because spiders feed on the other small insects.

While spiders can bite, and some can cause serious injury through venom they inject, most house spiders are harmless to humans, and actually don't want to see you at all – they like to live solitary lives.



Termites

For most homeowners, just hearing the word termite strikes fear into your heart.

Termites are small pests that live in colonies and feed on wood. Worker termites are smaller and harder to detect. They are white or creamy in color, wingless and generally between 1/8 and 1/4 inch in length. It can be easy to confuse ants and termites, but ants generally have a narrow waist, much like a wasp, while termites have a broad waist and their bodies look “bulkier” as a result. Winged termites, or “swarmers” are larger and more easy to detect. The winged swarmers take flight during the mating season looking for new spots to nest.

Damp wood termites can be found in areas of the home where water leaks occur. They enter through cracks or holes in the foundation, sill plate or other areas and set up their nest or “colonies” in damp basements and sometimes bathrooms.

Termites eat all kinds of wood and cellulose materials like newspaper. They can cause serious structural damage to a home quickly, with damage appearing in the form of sagging floors or ceilings or wood that appears to water damaged or dry rotted. Signs of a termite infestation are things like discarded wings from the swarmers, piles of sawdust, wood channels or damage and mud tunnels around the foundation or base of the house.

Acknowledgments and Resources

- Penn State Extension
- Penn State Department of Entomology
- Penn State College of Agricultural Science
- Steve Jacobs, Maryann Frazier, and Scott Camazine; Department of Entomology, Penn State Howard Nuernberger, College of Agricultural Sciences
- University of Nebraska at Lincoln
- Steve Jacobs, extension entomologist, Penn State
- Kristie Auman-Bauer, public relations and outreach coordinator, Pennsylvania IPM program
- Marcus Schneck
- Basement Guides.com
- Orkin
- Ehrlich
- Cleveland Clinic
- Berkeley Wellness
- Healthline.com
- US Centers for Disease Control
- World Health Organization
- Univar Solutions
- Wikipedia