

## How to Manage Outdoor Nuisance Cockroaches in Sacramento County

All around Sacramento County there have been increasing reports of cockroach activity, and the culprit is likely the invasive species *Blatta lateralis*, or the Turkestan cockroach. This outdoor species has recently spread across the southwestern United States and has been confirmed in Sacramento. They have been out-competing other outdoor roach species by reproducing faster, making them an effective invasive species. Here are some helpful facts and tips on how to manage this new resident pest.

**Appearance:** Before deciding on a management plan, it is important to identify the species of cockroach you are dealing with. Turkestan cockroach adults grow to 1 inch long, making them twice the length of their indoor cousins, *Blattella germanica* or the German cockroach. The female Turkestan cockroach can look similar to another common outdoor cockroach, *Blatta orientalis* (Oriental cockroach or waterbug). The winged males are lighter in color than their *B. orientalis* counterparts and are sometimes confused for another large species, *Periplaneta americana* or the American cockroach. For proper identification, use the University of California Integrated Pest Management program's cockroach management guidelines: (<http://ipm.ucanr.edu/PDF/PESTNOTES/pncockroaches.pdf>)

### TURKESTAN COCKROACH

Adult: female, 1 inch with cream-colored markings along the edges behind the head and around the short, rounded wings; males slightly smaller with yellowish-tan wings and cream-colored stripes along the edges.

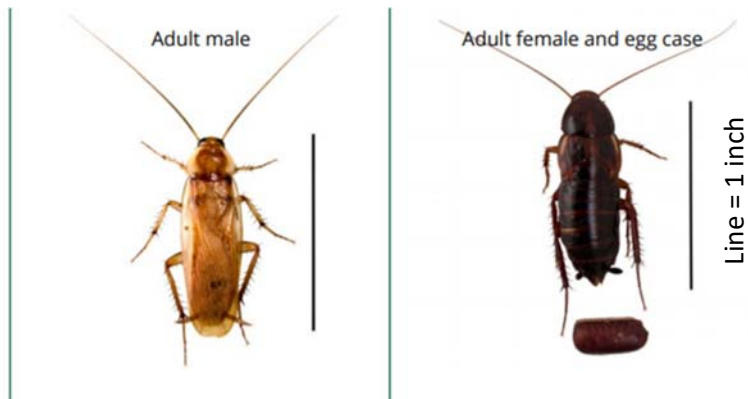


Photo Credit: UC ANR IPM, 2019

**Primary Habitat:** This species is well adapted for the urban environment, inhabiting hardscaping, gardens, and landscaping and rarely making their way indoors. Primary breeding and hiding locations include water meter boxes, other in-ground utility ports, voids under sidewalks and other concrete slabs, and crevices in rock walls. They may hide in sewer and drainage systems, but these are not their preferred home. They prefer dark, moist and covered areas during the day. At night, they will leave these harborage sites in search of food and water.

**Primary management techniques:** The best step you can take is to remove outdoor food sources for these roaches. Keep your yard and outside areas free of garbage, leaf litter, and pet food. Also be sure to fix any irrigation leaks you may have as they may act as a water source for roaches. Check water meter boxes, cracks between poured concrete, rock piles, compost piles, leaf litter, and potted plants to identify possible daytime hideouts for the insects.



**Preventing Cockroaches Inside:** While this species prefers to be outdoors, there is a possibility they can make their way indoors. They will not establish colonies inside your home but they are still unwelcome visitors. Be sure to install and maintain effective door sweeps and window seals and look for cracks that may allow outside pests access to your home. You can use sticky traps near possible access points to see if they are using those openings. These sticky traps will also help you identify other possible species of cockroaches that may be presenting a problem.

**More Aggressive Approaches:** While habitat modification and pest exclusion are your best tactics for controlling the Turkestan cockroach, you may still have issues and be interested in more aggressive management. Cockroach bait is the most effective, safest, and most easily utilized method for killing these roaches. Insecticide sprays will not prevent roaches from entering structures and may not impact populations at all. Consider calling a professional service instead of applying pesticide yourself. Improper application can lead to human, animal, and environmental health concerns. Remember that runoff from your yard enters the drainage system and ends up in local creeks and rivers, so never spray pesticides in or near manholes and drain inlets. Responsible pest management is a requirement to protecting our community. If you have any questions or concerns about pests and pesticides interacting with your neighborhood sewers and drains, please contact your local utility authority.



**For additional questions or concerns about how your municipality is responding to this issue, please direct your inquiries to your local stormwater municipality. More information will be available at <https://www.beriverfriendly.net/>.**