

I D E N T I F Y I N G

# COMMON HOUSEHOLD INSECTS

I N P E N N S Y L V A N I A



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Pest identification is the first step in following an Integrated Pest Management, or IPM program. The pictures and descriptions in this publication should help the homeowner or apartment dweller identify common insects found in the home. For more complete information about the insects, their potential as pests, and how to prevent or control them, contact your county Extension office. The phone number may be found in the Blue Pages of the phone book. In addition, you may call the Penn State Department of Entomology at (814) 865-1895 or visit the department's web site at <http://www.ento.psu.edu/>. To learn more about IPM, call 1-800-PENN IPM or visit our web site at <http://paipm.cas.psu.edu>.

IPM is choosing the correct tool to eliminate household pests that will save you time, money and reduce the amount of chemical exposure to your family. The Pennsylvania IPM Program is a collaboration between The Pennsylvania State University and The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture aimed at promoting Integrated Pest Management in both agricultural and non-agricultural situations.

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### **1 Indian Meal Moth**

This common pantry pest can be found in foods such as flour, corn meal, dried fruits, bird feed and dry dog food. The moth is 1/2 inch long.

### **3 Larder Beetle**

This household pest lays its eggs in dry pet food, corn meal, animal products and on dead insects. The beetle is dark brown and approximately 1/2 inch in length.

### **5 Brown-banded Cockroach**

This pest can be found in warmer areas of homes and apartments and is about 1/2 inch in length and light brown. Frequently transported in furniture, this insect will rapidly spread throughout an entire building.

### **7 Oriental Cockroach**

Oriental cockroaches prefer dark, damp areas, for example, beneath sinks and washing machines and in damp basements. They are about 1 1/4 inches long, dark brown, and are found with decaying organic matter indoors and out.

### **9 Bed Bug**

Bed bugs are active at night and can be found during the day hiding in cracks and crevices in walls, floors, beds and furniture. They are oval, chestnut brown insects and are flattened from top to bottom, measuring less than 1/4 of an inch in length.

### **11 Tick**

Ticks feed on the blood of vertebrate animals and can transmit diseases, including Lyme disease. Ticks are very small, from 1/50 to 1/8 of an inch long, and can be found searching for host animals from the tips of grasses and shrubs.

### **2 Saw-toothed Grain Beetle**

A common flour, pasta and cereal pest, this small insect will likely go unnoticed until it becomes abundant. The beetle is about 1/16 inch long.

### **4 American Cockroach**

The largest of the species common to Pennsylvania, this reddish brown cockroach is approximately 1 1/2 inches in length. It is commonly found in basements, packing houses and grocery stores and feeds on a variety of materials.

### **6 German Cockroach**

The German Cockroach is the most common cockroach species in houses, apartments and hotels. It is 1/2 to 5/8 of an inch long and tan to light brown and usually found in kitchens and bathrooms.

### **8 Black Carpet Beetle**

The Black Carpet Beetle is 1/4 to 1/2 inch long and can be found in lint around base-boards and other areas. The larvae eat almost any animal product, including leather, wool, silk, feathers and hair.

### **10 Human Louse**

Head and body lice are very small, measuring 1/16 to 1/12 of an inch. These blood-sucking insects are spread by the sharing of hair-brushes, combs, hats, clothes, toilet seats and bedding.

### **12 Flea**

Fleas are small insects under 1/4 inch long and are dark brown (specimen- in photo lightened to show detail). Fleas are usually found on cats and dogs, but some types will attack other animals and humans as well.

### **13 Mosquito**

Mosquitoes are small flies that breed in standing water. Females must have a blood meal before laying eggs, which brings them into households and yards, creating an annoying pest situation.

### **15 Asian Lady Beetle**

Lady Beetles can be found in homes seeking warmth during the months from September to April. These harmless insects are broadly oval and yellow to red with or without black spots on the wing covers.

### **17 Western Conifer Seed Bug**

This so-called leaf-footed bug becomes a nuisance when it enters homes in search of over-wintering sites in the fall. Adults are 3/4 of an inch long and brownish on top. The flight pattern and loud buzz produced by this pest resemble those of a wasp.

### **19 Silverfish**

Silverfish are either gray or silver with long antennae and three long filaments extending from the abdomen. They feed on any substance containing starch -including books, wallpaper, linens and cereals.

### **21 Powderpost Beetle**

Powderpost beetles breed in dead and dried hardwood. They are small, brown insects less than 1/4 inch in length. They enter lumber while it is being stored and cured, then emerge later from the finished product.

### **23 Carpenter Bee**

Carpenter Bees resemble bumblebees in both size and appearance. The carpenter bee, however, has a shiny black, hairless abdomen (rear-end). They are 1/2 to 1 inch in length, and are found under the eaves in homes and nest underground.

### **14 House Fly**

House flies are strongly suspected of transmitting at least 65 diseases to humans and can be identified by four dark stripes on their thorax. They feed on fecal matter, discharges from wounds and decaying matter.

### **16 Booklice**

Booklice resemble lice in size and shape but only feed on fungi or molds. They will feed on food products and similar materials that support mold growth as well as the starchy paste of wallpaper and books.

### **18 European Earwig**

The most distinguishing physical feature of the earwig is the claw-like forceps located on the hind end of the abdomen. Earwigs are 5/8 inch long and dark reddish-brown. They become a pest when they seek shelter in homes.

### **20 Carpenter Ant**

Large, darkly colored carpenter ant workers often invade homes in search of food and may excavate moist, rotting wood and other soft materials to make satellite nests. The workers are wingless and 1/4 to 1/2 inch in length.

### **22 Termite**

Like Carpenter Ants, termites are social insects that live in colonies and excavate wood. While an ant has a narrow, wasp-like waist, a termite has a broad waist. Workers are creamy-white, wingless and 1/8 to 1/4 inch in length.

# Pantry Pests



1 Indian Meal Moth



2 Saw-toothed Grain Beetle



3 Larder Beetle



4 American Cockroach



5 Brown-banded Cockroach



6 German Cockroach



7 Oriental Cockroach



8 Black Carpet Beetle

I = Actual Insect Size  
(See reverse for insect descriptions)

# Public Health Pests



9 Bed Bug



10 Human Louse



11 Tick



12 Flea



13 Mosquito



14 House Fly

Nuisance Pests



15 Asian Lady Beetle



16 Booklouse



17 Western Conifer Seed Bug



18 European Earwig



19 Silverfish

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Structural Pests



20 Carpenter Ant



21 Powderpost Beetle



22 Termite



23 Carpenter Bee