

HOME GROUNDS FACT SHEET



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Cave (Camel) Crickets

The camel cricket is nocturnal and commonly found in damp basements, garages, and crawl spaces. They often invade our homes to over winter or when it is too dry and hot outside. The biology of the group is not well known but they have been found in greenhouses all over the world for years. The crickets entering our homes are mostly from the genus *Ceuthophilus*, and the camel crickets are called so because of the humpback arch of their body. They can live and reproduce indoors and have been found feeding on a variety of items. They eat organic materials including fabrics.



Description

These soundless and wingless crickets are approximately ½–1½ inches in length at maturity. The females have an egg laying body part called an ovipositor which can be larger than half its body length. The threadlike antennae are often longer than the entire body. They can be light to dark brown and sometimes have a banded appearance. The young nymphs are similar but smaller than the adults and the female nymphs do not yet have an ovipositor.

Habits

The camel cricket is considered to be a minor pest in most homes. However they have been found in large numbers in damp basements, garages, crawl spaces, and storage rooms. They eat anything from sponge mops to lace curtains. They can breed throughout the year indoors. Outside they are found in leaf piles, under logs and in holes in the ground. The females deposit eggs which hatch in the spring.

Integrated Pest Management (IPM)

Considerations

IPM is a common sense approach to pest control and plant care. It employs a number of measures to prevent, control or reduce problems. Always use the least toxic method first. A good mechanical control, in many instances, is to vacuum the insects and then throw away the bag. The best preventative method regarding household pests in addition to regular house cleaning is to monitor the home, i.e. note any cracks in foundations, air spaces between windows and frames, poor fitting doors, moisture from leaks, etc. and correct such situations.

Detection and Control

There are methods to control these pests but I caution you there is no one time fast way to eliminate the problem. You can use approved insecticides (**read the label and follow directions**) such as boric acid or call in a certified pesticide applicator but you will be lucky if you never see one in your home again. The ways to help control these crickets are: 1) try to seal entry points such as vents and doorways, 2) remove moist harborage areas outside which are close to your home, 3) keep basements and crawl spaces as dry as possible, 4) use sticky glue traps to keep the population down, but remember to remove the traps or the odor will remind you and 5) get out your vacuums and get as many as you can trash the bags each time you vacuum or they may crawl out and invade again.

Contact your local Cornell Cooperative Extension office for specific pesticide recommendations.

References: *Handbook of Household and Structural Insect Pests* copyright 2000,
NPCA Field Guide to Structural Pests copyright 1992, *An Introduction to the Study of Insects* Third Edition

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