

# Crickets

*Gryllus* sp., *Acheta domesticus*, and *Ceuthophilus* sp.

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## Photo Gallery



Field cricket, *Gryllus* sp.



Cave cricket, *Ceuthophilus* sp.



[Horsehair worm](#), *Gordius* sp., an internal parasite of crickets, cockroaches, grasshoppers, and others.

## Description and Biology:

Several cricket species may be found in the home. Adult **field** (*Gryllus* spp.) and **house** (*Acheta domesticus*) crickets are black or yellowish-brown, respectively, and 3/4 to 1 inch long. The house cricket has three dark bands on the head. Both species have slender long antennae and wings when mature. The wings of the field cricket are projected backward like pointed coat tails. **Camel** or **cave** crickets are wingless, have long antennae, and are light tan to dark brown. The head is bent downward with the back arched giving the cricket a humpbacked appearance. All three species have conspicuous, enlarged hind legs used for jumping.

**Field crickets** are found in meadows, pastures, along roadsides, and under trash and other debris. Eggs are normally laid in the ground during late summer and fall. Hatching occurs the following spring. Young crickets (nymphs) require approximately 15 weeks to complete development. Adults begin to appear in late summer and continue until the first autumn freeze. There is only one generation each year. Field crickets are normally found outdoors and prefer to feed on plant material. However, they will often seek shelter in buildings and other structures when environmental conditions are unfavorable or food becomes scarce.

**House crickets** live outdoors but can also breed indoors. Eggs are laid in cracks and crevices in dark locations (such as behind baseboards). Nymphs hatch from eggs in eight to 12 weeks and adults appear approximately one month later. These crickets are nocturnal, remaining hidden during the day, and are attracted to lights at night. House crickets are quite active and are frequently seen crawling up foundation walls where they invade homes through window wells and other entryways. They are omnivorous and will feed upon many household products including silk, woolens, paper, and various foods.

**Cave crickets** are infrequent pests of basements and other dark, damp areas. These insects avoid light and are normally found outdoors in cool, protected places such as caves, under logs or in hollow trees. They are not of economic importance in the home.

## Damage/Symptoms:

Crickets frequently become a pest in homes and other buildings. In addition to their bothersome chirping, some crickets will feed on a variety of fiber and food products found in the home. However, one or two crickets do not present a serious problem to the homeowner.

## Comments:

Satisfactory control of crickets involves prevention and, in some cases, application of an insecticide. Proper sanitation is an important means of

reducing infestation potential. Elimination of possible breeding sites will discourage crickets from laying eggs. All areas near buildings should be kept free of weeds and other dense vegetation. Discarded wood, bricks, piles of stones and other debris should be removed to eliminate areas where crickets can live. Garbage cans, compost piles and firewood should be kept away from buildings and raised off the ground if practical. All cracks, crevices, and points of entry near ground level should be caulked or sealed and screens and doors should be tight fitting. Since crickets are attracted to white, neon or mercury vapor lights, yellow or low-pressure sodium lighting should be used. If crickets are numerous, night-lights should be reduced or turned off.

Outside the home, the lower foundation and window wells may be treated with an insecticide. If cricket infestations are large, a 2- to 3-foot barrier swath treatment around the foundation will reduce the number of crickets attempting to invade the home. However, heavy migrations are difficult to control since contact with an insecticide residue does not result in immediate death. Several insecticides for outdoor use are available to homeowners. Older insecticides approved for use include products such as diazinon and carbaryl (Sevin). Some newer products contain active ingredients such as cyfluthrin, deltamethrin, tralomethrin, permethrin, and others. Some formulations of carbaryl should be applied with caution as staining of some surfaces may occur. Diazinon for residential uses will be phased out of the marketplace by December 2004. To control crickets indoors, aerosol formulations of pyrethrum and permethrin are currently registered for use in areas such as along baseboards, in closets, under stairways and other areas where crickets are found. Many of the newer insecticides mentioned for outdoor use are also being registered for indoor applications. Always read and follow label instructions while applying any of these chemical treatments to insure appropriate use.