



# VARMET GUARD®

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Common Name: **Brownbanded cockroach**  
Scientific Name: **Supella longipalpa**

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## BROWNBANDED COCKROACH

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**Introduction.** The brownbanded cockroach gets its name from the pale brown (tan) bands and partial bands that cross the wings of the adults near their attachment point (“shoulders”) on the thorax. Two distinct light brown bands also cross the thorax of the wingless nymphs (juveniles). The brownbanded cockroach is believed to have originated from Africa. It was introduced to Florida in the early 1900s and now occurs throughout the United States. This species usually is found indoors, especially in northern climates, where it has been carried into buildings concealed in luggage, boxes, used appliances and used furniture from other infested sites.

**Recognition.** Adult brownbanded cockroaches measure 1/3 to 1/2 inch long. They are marked with light brown or tan, brown and black. The pronotal shield (the forward upper part of the thorax that partially covers the head) is mostly black or dark brown with pale side borders. Adult males have slender abdomens and wings that cover the entire body while at rest. Males are capable of short flights when so motivated. Females are shorter, darker and have a broader abdomen than males. Females’ wings do not cover the abdomen and they are incapable of flight.

The egg capsule (ootheca) is light brown, measures about 1/4 inch long, is less than twice as long as it is wide, has subdivisional furrows extending its entire width, is slightly bowed or arched along the top, and contains 14 to 18 eggs.

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**Similar Groups.** (Adults only) (1) The German cockroach (*Blattella germanica*) has 2 dark longitudinal stripes on the pronotal shield. (2) Other cockroaches are larger and are not similarly marked with light brown crossbands on the wings and thorax.

**Biology.** The female carries her egg capsule for 24 to 36 hours and attaches or deposits it beneath shelves, and undersurfaces of appliances, computer / electronic equipment, cabinets and furniture. On the average, the female will produce about 14 egg capsules, averaging 16 eggs (range 14 to 18) each.

Developmental time (egg to adult) usually varies from 90 to 276 days, averaging about 161 days (5 months). In favorable environments, 3 to 4 generations per year may be expected. Adults live about 206 days (range 131 -315 days).

**Habits.** Brownbanded cockroaches are found throughout structures but show a preference for warmer (80°F) areas. They are usually found in kitchens and bathrooms, but infestations often occur in rooms where food is stored and consumed and where suitable harborages occur. Brownbanded cockroaches have been found to utilize dead insects as a food source in residences and office buildings. Harborages include crevices and concealed aspects associated with suspended / drop ceiling tracks, utility penetrations, wall molding, wall hangings, light switch and outlet plates, appliance motor compartments, electronic circuit boards and transformers of entertainment systems and computer equipment, cabinets, desks, dressers, night stands, upholstered furniture and closets. First instar (hatchling) nymphs require a crack of about 1/32 inch; whereas, adults require a crack of about 1/8 inch in width.

Brownbanded cockroaches are most commonly introduced into buildings via items moved from infested buildings and residences. This species is most active at night, in darkened situations. Occasionally, it may be observed in the open, on lit surfaces and during daylight hours. Individuals of this species may be found in isolated sites or small groupings of a few to several brownbanded cockroaches may be found together.

**Cultural Control & Precautionary Measures.** The best way to avoid a brownbanded cockroach infestation is to thoroughly inspect used appliances, electronic equipment (including computer components), furniture and boxes of storage before bringing these items into your house or workplace.

The best way to get rid of an infestation of brownbanded cockroaches is to 1) implement good sanitation and food storage practices, 2) call in the Varmant Guard pest management specialists and 3) refrain from using over-the-counter insecticides. The unskilled use of repellent insecticides will actually result in a larger, more scattered cockroach infestation. [Customer cooperation is essential.]

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**Professional Control.** Varmet Guard technicians utilize insecticide baits, non-repellent insecticide formulations and food-lure pest monitors (sticky traps) to destroy and capture brownbanded cockroaches. Baits are particularly effective, but correct placement along structural junctures and/or in cracks and crevices, in or near harborages, is essential. Incorporating pest monitoring into the service helps with long-term control.