



# VARMINT GUARD®

ENVIRONMENTAL  
SERVICES INC.



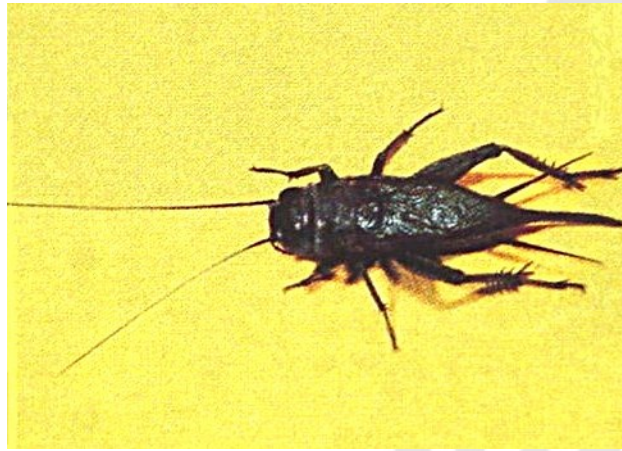
Residential Services ✧ Commercial Services ✧ Bird Solutions

Common Name: **Field crickets**  
Scientific Name: **Gryllus species**

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## FIELD CRICKETS

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**Introduction.** Field crickets can severely damage or destroy field crops and vegetable crops and hence, probably get their common name from this activity. The genus *Gryllus* is widely distributed throughout the Americas, and consists of about 25 species in the United States. Ohio's common large field cricket is *Gryllus pennsylvanicus*.

**Recognition.** Adult field crickets are 1/2 to 1 1/8 inch long, typically black in color, have antennae that are threadlike (much longer than the body) and have wings that lay flat on the back. Both sexes have a pair of structures called cerci protruding from the rear of the abdomen that are long and feeler-like. The adult female has a long tube-like ovipositor (egg laying structure) located at tip of abdomen, between the cerci.

Nymphs are similar to adults except smaller, and lack wings and an ovipositor (females).

**Similar Crickets.** (1) House crickets (*Acheta domesticus*) are light tan-brown with 3 dark cross bands on the head. (2) Camel (cave) crickets (family Gryllacrididae) have a humpbacked appearance, are wingless, and have very long antennae that touch or almost touch where they attach on the face.



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**Biology.** Field crickets usually overwinter in the egg stage but depending on the species may overwinter as later stage nymphs. The females usually lay 150 to 400 eggs that are deposited singly in firm but moist soil. There are typically 8 (males) to 9 (females) instars (growth stages), which require 78 to 90 days (range 65 to 102) to mature. There may be 1 to 3 generations per year.

**Habits.** Outdoors, around buildings, field crickets are typically found in moist situations such as in mulched areas, unweeded plant beds, in and around woodpiles, stones, and debris. The male's chirping often indicates their presence, which for most species occurs during the day and night. Rubbing the front wings together makes these sounds. His "calling song" serves to attract females. They are often attracted in great number to electric lights.

Field crickets can destroy field crops such as alfalfa, wheat, oats, rye, and vegetable crops such as tomatoes, cucumbers, peas, beans, etc. Huge outbreaks occasionally occur in the Midwest and South where they sometimes enter towns and cities in great swarms. They also feed on other insects and their own kind.

They do not survive indoors for long periods of time and usually die off by winter. However, they may cause damage to fabrics of cotton, wool, linen, silk, synthetics, or leather and fur garments, especially when soiled with perspiration of food.

**Cultural Control & Preventative Measures.** Cricket control starts outdoors with the reduction or elimination of moist harborage near the structure by mowing lawns, weeding plant beds, removing woodpiles, stacks and piles of debris away from the foundation. Since they are attracted to lights, it is important to change outdoor lighting from white incandescent or mercury vapor lamps to less-attractive yellow bulbs or sodium vapor lamps. Seal possible points of entry such as around windows and doors, holes in masonry and utility penetrations. Defective or missing threshold plates, door sweeps, screen windows and screen doors should be replaced or installed. Sticky traps placed along the inside perimeter of garage and basement foundation walls can be useful in trapping invasive field crickets. A vacuum cleaner fitted with a hose attachment can also be used to remove occasional crickets from living spaces.

**Professional Control.** A Varmant Guard technician will apply an exterior barrier treatment using residual liquid insecticide around the foundation perimeter, beneath lower siding, along exterior molding/trim, thresholds, patio and deck attachments. Residual liquid and/or granular insecticides or granular insecticide baits may be used to treat mulch and landscaping features located close to the foundation, as well. A quarterly pest management service program may be required in cases where large populations of field crickets are present and where landscaping conditions and locality are conducive to their propagation.

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