



# VARMANT GUARD®

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Common Name: **Pennsylvania wood cockroach**  
Scientific Name: **Parcoblatta pensylvanica**

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## PENNSYLVANIA WOOD COCKROACH

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**Introduction.** The Pennsylvania wood cockroach is found in the southern states and northward through the midwestern and northeastern states and into Canada. It is apparently a native species. As its name implies, this outdoor cockroach is most frequently associated with wooded settings.

**Recognition.** Adult Pennsylvania wood cockroach males measure about 7/8 to 1 1/8 inch long whereas, adult females are 1/2 to 3/4 inch long. They are chestnut brown with the pronotal shield (the back behind the head) and forewings edged in white. The male is fully winged and a good flier; whereas, the female's wings are reduced, covering only about 2/3 of the abdomen, and functionless for flight. Nymphal instars are light reddish-brown to grayish-brown.

The egg capsule (ootheca) is yellowish-brown and about 1/2 inch long. Egg capsules are 2 to 3 times longer than wide and have the appearance of a slender, arched pouch or purse.



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**Similar Insects.** The nymphs of oriental cockroaches are similar to those Pennsylvania wood cockroaches. Typically, oriental cockroaches inhabit urbanized and established suburban settings; whereas, Pennsylvania wood cockroaches inhabit rural wooded settings.

**Biology.** The female deposits and cements her egg capsules under the loose bark of dead trees, stumps, fallen logs, and in other protected places. On the average, the female will produce about 30 egg capsules, each containing about 32 eggs (range 32 to 36).

Developmental time (egg to adult) is quite long, averaging about 318 days (range 280 to 766). In Ohio the egg capsules are produced during the summer, the nymphs hatch in the summer, overwinter as partially grown nymphs, and mature the following May or June. During the winter, the nymphs are quite active when exposed by removing loose bark. Adults are present from May until October.

**Habits.** The Pennsylvania wood cockroach is an outdoor species, which can only rarely survive indoors. Outdoors they are usually found under the loose bark of dead trees, in treeholes, and in woodpiles. However, they have been found under cedar-shake shingles and siding, and in gutters.

Both sexes can be or are typically brought in with firewood. Males are good fliers and are attracted to light, so they often enter at night via cracks and crevices through which light penetrates to the outside. If not brought in, females must crawl in because they have functionless wings. This species rarely breeds or survives indoors. Inside, males are usually inactive during the day unless disturbed, but fly in the vicinity of lights at night.

They are reported to prefer sweets and starchy materials as food.

**Cultural Control & Precautionary Measures.** Control is seldom required indoors because this species usually does not survive inside. Preventative pest control is what is usually required. This consists of nailing flashing down tight, sealing exterior cracks and crevices with silicone caulk, making sure all windows have tight fitting screens in good repair, all doors have doorsweeps and self-closing screen doors which are tight fitting and in good repair, and all exterior vents or vent openings are screened with wire hardware cloth no larger than 1/8 inch mesh. Window screening must be kept in good repair. Changing white incandescent bulbs to yellow bulbs around entrance doors may help.

**Professional Control.** A Varmet Guard technician will apply an exterior barrier treatment using residual liquid insecticide around the foundation perimeter, beneath lower wood siding, eaves and soffits, along exterior molding, flashing, fascia and the roofline.

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Appropriate insecticide baits and dusts may be used indoors and in garages, in conjunction with food lure pest monitors (sticky traps), when warranted. In severe infestations, attics and/or crawlspaces may be fogged with a non-residual aerosol insecticide.

A quarterly pest management service program may be required in cases where large populations of Pennsylvania wood roaches are present and where landscaping conditions and locality are conducive to their propagation.

