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ENTOMOLOGY FACT SHEET
No. 26—Revised 1982
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Crickets

Crickets may accidentally invade homes, but they seldom reproduce there. Their method of entry usually cannot be determined easily, although open doors and windows as well as cracks in poorly fitted windows, in foundations, or in siding afford entry. Specific factors favoring invasion of homes and the damage produced vary with the kind of cricket. In Minnesota, common crickets found in houses are the field cricket, the house cricket, and the camel or cave cricket.

CAMEL OR CAVE CRICKETS

These insects resemble house and field crickets only in their long antennae and well developed jumping legs (see figure 3). They are often light tan with dark brown bands on some segments. Unlike true crickets, they are wingless. Camel or cave crickets are found mainly in cool, damp, and dark areas. Outdoors, they frequent the undersides of logs and flat stones. It is the search for this kind of environment that leads them to the basement and other dark areas of the house. Logs and flat stones with suitable organic matter for food near a house increase the likelihood of infestation.

FIELD AND HOUSE CRICKETS

Field Cricket. The field cricket (figure 1) is usually black, is larger and more robust than the house cricket, and has wings that project back like pointed coat tails. Field crickets chirp.

Field crickets consume dead or weakened crickets, grasshoppers, cutworms, and other insects. In the home, they may feed on cotton, linen, wool, or silk. Clothing or material soiled with food or perspiration is attractive to crickets.

House Cricket. The house cricket (figure 2), which is 18 to 20 mm long, is light yellowish-brown and has three dark bands behind the head. Females have a long tail-like appendage that is used for egg laying.

In warm weather the house cricket can live outdoors, especially in garbage dumps. With the approach of winter it enters homes. It is night active and may feed on woolens, silks, and other insects, including other crickets.

Damage Caused by Camel or Cave Crickets

Much less damage is done by cave or camel crickets than by field and house crickets. The diet of cave or camel crickets consists of plant debris; they seldom chew fabrics. Sometimes they chew paper products.

CONTROL OF CRICKETS

Crickets should not be considered a serious urban pest. Understanding the behavior of house, field, and camel crickets is important in maintaining control of these insects.

Crickets as a group are usually night active. They prefer to live and hide in close quarters such as in cracks or crevices; behind and under shelves, cabinets, and work benches; and around windows, along the bases of walls, and in corners. They often invade a home seeking moisture. Field and house crickets have a strong attraction to lights. Camel crickets are not light attracted and prefer dark, damp areas in basements.

Crickets produce only one generation a year. Field crickets overwinter as eggs. House and camel crickets may overwinter indoors as adults, but they often die in late fall or early winter.

Limiting areas where crickets could live or gain entry to your home is the most important strategy to use in cricket control. Keeping your lawn well mown and weeding ornamental shrubbery surrounding your house regularly will limit the areas where house, field, or camel crickets could stay.

Damage Caused by Field and House Crickets

The extent of damage caused by house and field crickets depends on the number feeding and the length of time they have been present. Large numbers of field and house crickets can do severe damage in one night.

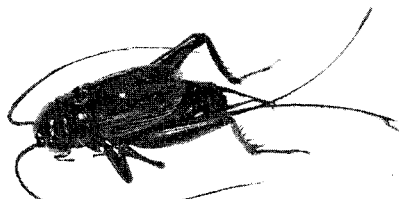


Figure 1. Field cricket, approximately natural size.

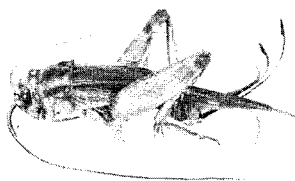


Figure 2. House cricket, approximately natural size.

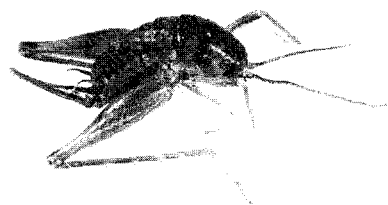


Figure 3. Camel cricket, approximately natural size.

Use outdoor lighting only when necessary. When possible, use yellow lights, which do not attract insects as readily as white, neon, or mercury vapor lights do.

Eliminate any cracks or crevices around the foundation, doors, windows, vents, etc., that could be used by crickets for entry into your house. Raise garbage cans off the ground and, if practical, store firewood several feet away from the foundation.

Indoors, eliminate any moist areas by using a dehumidifier or fan. Practice good sanitation and keep debris or clutter from accumulating.

Using chemical insecticides should be secondary and supplemental to these methods of cricket control.

Chemical Control Outdoors

Choose **either** 5-percent granular bait containing carbaryl (Sevin) or 2-percent granular diazinon. Apply the insecticide outside along the foundation in late summer.

Insecticides used along the foundation do not provide long residual protection. If crickets continue to be a problem, you must reapply the insecticide once every two weeks.

Chemical Control Indoors

If you use insecticides indoors, apply them to the area where you have found crickets or where they hide. Remember that any insecticide will be effective only temporarily. Spraying in the air is undesirable and ineffective. Be sure to

consider the surface to be sprayed. For example, sprays do not perform well on concrete because its porous surface soaks the spray up like a sponge. Little chemical residue is left on the surface to be contacted by the crickets, and control is therefore ineffective.

Camel crickets appear to be attracted to the sticky traps used for cockroaches; large numbers of these crickets have been caught in them. When applicable, such traps could be used as a supplement to sanitation.

For indoor control, choose ready-to-use ½-percent diazinon (Spectracide) **or** mix 4 tablespoons of the 25-percent liquid concentrate per gallon of water, or choose malathion (a 3-percent emulsion; ¾ cup 57-percent premium grade concentrate per gallon of water).

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