How To Get Rid of German Roaches

By DoMyOwn staff

OVERVIEW

A Comprehensive Integrated Pest Management Program:

If you have a German Roach problem, it could be that you are at your wits' end, wondering how to get rid of one of the most stubborn household pests in existence. German Roaches get into everything, multiply rapidly, and can survive for several months without food and up to two weeks without water. These little guys definitely pose a challenge, but with the proper tools and products, you **can** win the battle over German Roaches by following this strict Integrated Pest Management, or IPM, program.

How To Use IPM:

Each of the following sections describes one component of anIPM program for German Roach Control. By carefully selecting the proper combination of components that apply to your infestation level and circumstances, and by practicing these components vigilantly over time, complete control and elimination of the target population can successfully be achieved.

The Components of IPM for German Roaches:

STEP 1 Sanitation

Sanitation is by far the most important component of any pest control effort! Failure to practice good housekeeping is the primary reason for outbreaks of German Roaches. Like most pests, German Roaches require 3 things to thrive: food, water, and harborage. If you can eliminate even one of these things through proper sanitation, the roach population will be forced to either die or move somewhere else. We will discuss how to eliminate or drastically reduce the availability of each of the elements that roaches require for survival. First, however, it is vital to understand that in order for any of the following IPM components to work against German Roaches, sanitation must continually be practiced and remain the backbone of the program.

STEP 2 Eliminating Food Sources

Eliminating food sources is a constant battle in German Roach control. While this effort involves a great deal of work and vigilance, the results are well worth the effort.

Methods of Eliminating Sources of Food:

- **Clean Kitchen Appliances:** Roaches in your kitchen are probably living off the months or years' worth of grease and food spills under, behind, and alongside your appliances. The greatest problem spots usually include the refrigerator, dishwasher, stove, toaster, microwave, and underneath the kitchen sink.
- **Empty Cabinets and Clean Them Out:** Another common food source for German Roaches is the crumbs and food spills inside kitchen cabinets.
- **Limit Food Consumption to One Room of the House:**Allowing food to be consumed in all areas of the home leads to crumbs and food spills that often go unnoticed and make tasty temptations for German Roaches. This practice contributes to the spread of an infestation to other areas of the home, other than the kitchen.
- **Vacuum the Kitchen Floor Thoroughly Each Night Before Bed:** German Roaches come out to feed at night. If you will practice your most rigorous cleaning rituals in the kitchen just before bed each night, there will be nothing or very little left for foraging roaches to snack on.
- **Vacuum All Other Non-food Areas of the Home Every 2 to 3 Days:**This practice contributes to overall sanitation and also helps to eliminate roach feces, skins, body parts, and egg sacs, all of which contain pheromones that attract other roaches to the same areas.
- **Wipe Down Kitchen Countertops With a Disinfectant Spray Each Night.**
- **Empty Pet Food Containers at Night, or Place Them on the Back Porch or in a Plastic Bag.**
- **Store Food in Sealed Containers:** German roaches are small enough to slip into the cardboard packaging that many foods are stored in.
- **Use a Trash Can With a Tight Fitting Lid, and Take Out the Trash Each Night Before Bed.**

STEP 3 Eliminating Water

Sources

While it is nearly impossible to eliminate all water sources, even greatly limiting available sources will cause negative stress on a German Roach population. Fewer water sources to go around means that many roaches will die.

Methods of Eliminating Sources of Water:

- Fix leaky faucets and pipes.
- Repair sweating pipes.
- Before bed, seal or close any sinks in the kitchen and bathrooms, and dry them completely with a paper towel.
- Dry out the bathtub and shower completely and stop up the drain before bed.
- Place wet dish rags and sponges in an airtight plastic storage bag overnight, or place them directly in the washing machine.
- Pet water dishes should be placed outside overnight or be dried completely and refilled in the morning.
- Wet toothbrushes should be dried as best they can and sealed in plastic bags.

STEP 4 Eliminating Harborages

German Roaches prefer a tight crack or crevice, or a dark wall void in which to hide out of sight during daylight hours. Eliminate as many harborages as you can, and German Roaches will hit the road.

Methods of Eliminating Sources of Water:

- Seal off cracks and crevices with a caulking gun.
- Seal off holes surrounding pipes or other light and wall fixtures with a material such as steel wool.
- Windows and doors should fit tightly and squarely within their frames to prevent both harborage and entry from outside.
- Place tape over holes and crevices in appliances and other household items where appropriate. Such items may include computers, telephones, bread machines, alarm clocks, etc. This is only necessary in areas where many roaches are seen frequently.
- Windows and doors should fit tightly and squarely within their frames to prevent both harborage and entry from outside.

STEP 5 Chemical Insecticides

If the German Roach infestation is limited to the kitchen and bathroom only (i.e. you have not seen any roaches in any other areas of your home), you may be able to get away with using baits only. In apartment buildings where roaches come down from other units through wall voids, it is absolutely essential to include dusts and residuals in your IPM program. The idea with dusting and spraying is that the chemical settles where pests travel and hide along baseboards, walls, and deep inside cracks and crevices. Once exposed to enough insecticide for a long period of time, German Roaches will begin to die.

- **Dusts:** The dusts that work best against German Roaches include Delta Dust and BorActin Insecticide Powder. Using a Bellow Hand Duster and following label instructions, apply dust liberally underneath and behind baseboards, behind wall outlets, and underneath appliances such as washers and dryers. Dusts may also be sprinkled in the back of bathroom cupboards and cabinets, and applied liberally in wall voids. Dusts are usually effective up to 8 months, or as long as they remain dry.
- **Residual Sprays:** Demand CS, Suspend SC, or Demon WP provide excellent control when mixed in a2 gallon sprayer and applied at a low-pressure setting along baseboards, window, and door frames, on the underside of furniture, behind bookshelves, and in other problem areas as listed on the product label. Residual sprays need to be reapplied every month to every 3 months, depending on the level of infestation. It is also a good idea to alternate products with different active ingredients for each application. This will help prevent the roaches from quickly building up a resistance to any single active ingredient.
- **Contact Sprays:** Contact sprays will kill roaches immediately on contact, and can also be used to "flush out" roaches from suspected harborages. Contact Sprays for German Roaches include CB-80, PT PI Aerosol Insecticide, and 565 Plus XLO.

STEP 6 Baiting

Next to sanitation, the next most important and essential component to an IPM program for German Roaches is baiting. By using gel bait placements in areas of highest travel, German Roach infestations can be reduced by up to 90% or eliminated completely within weeks. The idea behind baits is that each roach that feeds on the poisoned bait can contaminate up to 40 other roaches by way of contact, feces, or the other roaches feeding on its poisoned carcass. This domino effect knocks out roach populations at an incredible rate. Top of the line superior bait formulations for German Roach control include Advion Cockroach Gel Bait, Alpine Cockroach Gel Bait, and Maxforce FC Magnum. All are effective, but it could be that a given German Roach population prefers one formula over another, so you may want to try several baits in succession with a couple of weeks in between to measure success.

Gel bait and bait stations should be placed in the following locations for greatest efficacy:

- Behind kitchen cabinets and countertops.

- Behind wall hangings such as pictures, clocks, or posters.
- Behind, next to, and under the stove.
- In the corners up under the sink and other cabinets.
- In stored paper bags and boxes.
- Around pipes, cords, and cables that come out of the wall.
- In stored paper bags and boxes.
- Behind and under bathroom fixtures.
- Behind the medicine cabinet and vanity.
- In any cracks or crevices around shelves or wood.

Note: Residual spray insecticides should not be used in the kitchen or bathroom where bait placement exists, as the spray insecticides will repel roaches from baited areas, making it impossible for the bait to take effect and do its job.

Bait should be reapplied every 4 weeks or when placements appear to be used up, for heavy infestations.

STEP 7 Insect Grown Regulators (IGR's)

Even if baits, chemicals, and sanitation work to successfully kill off the present adult roach population, there will still exist egg sacs that hatch within 1 to 2 months after that last adult roach is sighted. That is why your IPM program must include an IGR, or Insect Growth Regulator.

What is an IGR? An IGR, or an Insect Growth Regulator, is a chemical used to disrupt and impede the life cycle of insects in the egg and larval stage of development. The idea with an IGR is that if an insect cannot reach adulthood, it cannot reproduce. In short, IGR is a form of "birth control" for German Roaches and other pests, which helps to keep populations under control by preventing current and future infestations.

- **The most common and effective IGR** used for German Roach control is Gentrol IGR, which comes in an aerosol, concentrated liquid, and point-source device.
- We recommend Gentrol IGR to be added to your hand sprayer and sprayed right along with your choice of a baseboard chemical such as Suspend SC, Demon WP, or Demand CS.
- For kitchen and bathroom areas, Gentrol Aerosol IGR, is the formulation of choice. Using the straw attachment, the IGR should be applied liberally to all visible cracks and crevices, including underneath, behind, and alongside appliances, behind outlets, along pipe collars, inside wall voids, and on top of kitchen cabinets near the ceiling.
- Continue to apply IGR every 4 to 6 weeks for up to 6 months, or until all signs of infestation have been eliminated.

Check out all of our roach control products!