

# Pennsylvania Wood Roach



Peggy K. Powell, Ph.D.  
Extension Specialist – Pesticide Impact

The Pennsylvania wood roach, *Parcoblatta pennsylvanica*, is a native inhabitant of many pine and hardwood forests in West Virginia. They “come with the territory” of houses built in such locations. Homeowners who realize that they will not infest their homes and that they are not harmful often learn to accept them as a natural part of the environment.

*Homeowners who realize that they will not infest their houses and that they are not harmful often learn to tolerate them...*

## Identification

The adult Pennsylvania wood roach is a slender brown cockroach with tan wings and a white edge on the segment behind the head. Adult males are 7/8-inch to 1-1/4 inches long with wings as long as the body. Females are 1/2-inch to 3/4-inch long with wings covering one-half the body. The immature stages, or nymphs, are solid dark brown.

## Biology and Habits

The Pennsylvania wood roach lives outdoors under bark or in hollow trees. They are also found under cedar shake siding or shingles on homes. The adult males are excellent fliers; the females do not fly. Around homes near wooded areas, males frequently fly to lights, while females sometimes conceal themselves in firewood piles. Adult wood roaches can be found from May until October.

Female wood roaches deposit their egg cases under bark or in other protected locations. The nymphs hatch and grow throughout the summer;

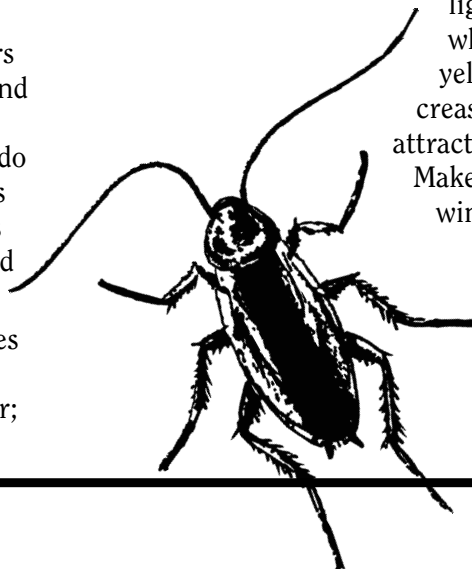
they spend the winter as large nymphs, in such places as under tree bark. The final molt to the adult stage takes place in the spring. After molting, the adults mate, and the females lay their eggs. Each curved, yellowish egg case contains about 30 eggs. The entire life cycle requires up to a full year.

## Prevention Methods

Unlike other cockroaches, which are repelled by light, male Pennsylvania wood roaches are attracted to light. They often fly to outdoor lights at night, especially during May and June. They may enter homes via cracks through which light is visible at night. An inspection of your home after

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dark may give you a clue as to how they are gaining access to the inside. Caulk any cracks through which light is visible. Reduce outdoor lighting or replace white light bulbs with yellow ones to decrease your home's attractiveness to them. Make sure that all windows and doors



*Adult male*

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*Most actual infestations involve colonization of the spaces underneath cedar shake shingles or siding.*

have tight-fitting screens and that exterior vents and louvers are covered with screen. Female wood roaches often inhabit firewood piles and may hitch a ride indoors on the logs. Be sure to carefully inspect each log before bringing it indoors.

### **Control Strategies**

Since the Pennsylvania wood roach is not a house-infesting species, chemical control is usually unnecessary. Remove any that do make their way inside by hand or with a vacuum cleaner. Most actual infestations involve colonization outdoors of the spaces underneath cedar shake shingles or siding. To control wood roaches in such spots, use a bulb or power duster to puff a less toxic insecticide dust, such as boric acid or diatomaceous earth, into spaces under the shakes. Be certain to wear a dust mask during application and to follow label directions.

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