

Cockroaches

Cockroaches belong to the order Blattoidea. There are 3,500 to 4,000 different species of cockroaches worldwide, and they are found everywhere in the world except for the polar ice caps. Cockroaches are among the hardiest of insects on Earth. Some are capable of remaining active for a month without food, and can survive on limited resources, like glue from the back of a postage stamp.

The American cockroach (*Periplaneta americana*), also known as the Palmetto Bug, is a large cockroach approximately one and half inches long. They are relatively flat, which enables them to crawl into narrow crevices. Adults have wings and will occasionally fly, but they prefer to run when disturbed. American cockroaches prefer to live in moist, humid environments, but can survive in dry areas as long as there is access to water. They are found throughout North America, but actually originated in Africa.

Cockroaches are considered living fossils because they belong to one of the oldest insect orders. The fossil record extends back to the Upper Carboniferous, more than 300 million years ago, where they were the most abundant insect order. Fossils of modern cockroaches first appeared in the early Cretaceous period 145 to 65.5 million years ago.

