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Camel Crickets

Camel crickets and closely related cave crickets belong to a large group of insects. They are found throughout the world with over 100 different kinds found in the United States and Canada. Unlike many other types of crickets, the camel crickets do not chirp. They have no sound producing organs.



Camel cricket

Courtesy Golden Bear Pest Control, Inc.

They do have chewing mouthparts, like other crickets, and can feed on many different kinds of animal products, plants, fabrics and even other insects. Though they are mostly considered just a nuisance pest, they can cause some damage, especially if they occur in large numbers. Indoors, they can damage fine fabrics and houseplants. Outdoors, they can damage plants, fabrics on lawn furniture, and have even been reported feeding on clothing on a clothesline.

Description. Camel crickets have an unusual humpbacked appearance with heads that are bent downward between their front legs. Their antennae are much longer than their bodies and their large hind legs make them very strong jumpers. Adults do not have wings and range in size from ½ to 1 ½ inches in length. Most species are light tan to dark brown in color. The immatures are similar to the adults in appearance, except they are smaller, and the female young do not

have a developed and noticeable egg-laying device at the end of their abdomen.

Habits and Habitat. Most of the crickets in this group are active at night and are attracted to areas with high humidity and moisture. Outdoors camel crickets and their cave cricket cousins are found in wood and stone piles, tall grass and weeds, hollows of trees, holes in the ground, and of course, caves. If found indoors, camel crickets often will be in damp basements, crawl spaces, or garages. When conditions are dry, camel crickets may be found in unusual places as they seek moister locations. Under such conditions, they may be found in the living areas of buildings, especially laundry rooms and bathrooms where humidity is higher.

Camel crickets spend the winter as either immatures or adults. In the spring, females lay eggs in the soil and they hatch in a few weeks. In greenhouses and other warm locations, camel crickets may breed year round. Very little is known about the biology of this group of crickets.

Nonchemical Control. Moisture is an important requirement for camel cricket survival so reducing the number of moist habitats is essential for good, long-term control. Preventing access to the structure is also important. Following a few simple steps can accomplish both strategies for effective control.

- Mow weeds and tall grass next to the building.
- Keep mulch, ground covers, shrubs and other moisture-retaining ornamentals away from the foundation wall.
- Keep wood piles away from entrances.
- Place tightly fitted screens on doors and windows.
- Use weather-stripping on the bottom of all entry points such as windows, and house and garage doors.
- Seal small openings with caulk or screening including areas such as crawl space and dryer vents.
- Properly ventilate crawl spaces and basements to reduce moisture.

- Stack boxes in basements and garages on pallets and away from the wall.
- Glue or sticky traps near doorways, or a vacuum for small number can be very effective. Discard the vacuum bag to avoid reinfestation.

Chemical Control. If camel crickets are still a problem after taking habitat altering steps to reduce moisture and access to the structure, outdoor chemical control may be necessary. Concentrate applications around the perimeter of the structure, especially close to entrances such as doors, windows and vents. If basements or crawl spaces need treatment, be cautious about spraying in confined areas. Only consider chemical control indoors when the population is large or when camel crickets threaten valuable items. Select a product labeled for the site you need to treat. Carefully read and follow label instructions.

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