

Camel Crickets: Quiet Cave Dwellers...



Clemson University - USDA Cooperative Extension Slide Series,
Bugwood.org

Camel Cricket Facts:

- 89 species worldwide
- No wings
- Do not chirp like many other crickets
- Do not bite or sting
- Attracted to cool, moist environments

The Hump-backed Cricket

Although camel crickets are strange, monstrous looking creatures compared to their cousins, field and house crickets, they are gentle creatures which only occasionally invade structures. The name camel cricket refers to the fact that they have a hump-backed appearance. They are large wingless crickets with strong jumping legs. They have extremely long antennae, and combined with their long slender legs, they can sometimes appear spider-like. All of the species in this family are referred to as camel crickets and many of them have a mottled appearance.

Lifestyle

Natural habitats of camel crickets include: caves, under logs, under stones, near or under rotting leaves, in stacks of firewood, and in overgrown areas. Outdoors, camel crickets eat organic debris like leaves. Indoors, they will eat paper and sometimes even fabric if another food source is not available.

Why do they come indoors?

There are multiple factors that determine whether or not camel crickets will come indoors. The simple answer is food and shelter. To be more specific though, camel crickets are attracted to dark, cool, moist places. Weather changes can cause them to move indoors in big groups. This can be seen if it's either very hot, or very cold outside.

Problems caused by crickets

As with any insect indoors, their shed skins and feces can cause allergic reactions in humans. However, this is usually not a problem unless large populations are present. Their feeding can cause damage but again, it would take a large population to do any noticeable harm. These insects are referred to as a "nuisance pest" because they usually don't cause any physical damage but their presence alone is enough to distress many people. However, problems with these or any other insects should be reported and handled quickly, before large populations build up. This is especially important in schools to ensure the health and safety of children and youth.

Camel Cricket Control

First and foremost, these insects are coming from outside so block the entry sites. Patch any holes, seal any cracks, and generally look for places that they might be coming in from. Camel crickets are attracted to dark, moist places. They are normally found in basements, garages, and crawl spaces. Fix any leaks immediately and make sure the entire problem area is dry. In general, clean up any messy areas that might serve as hiding places for the crickets. Many of us have cardboard storage boxes around but cardboard is very attractive for many pests because they use it for shelter and they'll also feed on it. Put any storage items in plastic containers with lids that will lock into place to protect items and keep pests out. Sticky traps can also be put out to catch the crickets.

Cricket Pests

Camel crickets aren't the only cricket invaders that can be occasional pests in structures. The field cricket and the house cricket also come inside seeking food and shelter. The control for these three species is somewhat similar, but sometimes it helps to know what species in particular that you're dealing with.

Field Cricket



Joseph Berger, Bugwood.org

Camel Cricket



David Cappaert, Michigan State University, Bugwood.org

House Cricket



Joseph Berger, Bugwood.org

For further information about Alabama's IPM program, Please contact:
Dr. L.C. "Fudd" Graham
(334) 844-2563
fgraham@acesag.auburn.edu or
Krystal McDuff
waltmkg@auburn.edu

