

Cockroach Baiting



Figures 1 & 2 Containerized bait stations



Figure 3. Insect Growth Regulator



Figure 4 - Gel baits and bait gun with holster.

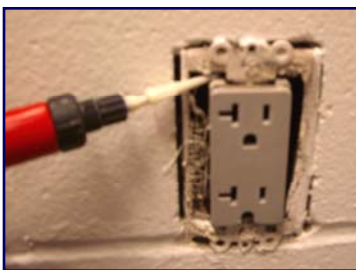


Figure 5. Plastic tips should be used when baiting near electrical sources.

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In previous issues of the Pest Press, we have discussed cockroach monitoring, clutter control, and sanitation. You have cleaned up, initiated a monitoring program, and you find that your monitors indicate you have a cockroach problem. So, what now?

Well, you want to find out why the cockroaches are there, and if necessary treat the problem. There are several reasons you may have cockroaches in an area. We know that all living things need food, water and harborage to survive, but pests also need access. If we limit or eliminate food, water, harborage, and access, we shouldn't have a problem, but what if we do?

After other management strategies have been exhausted, you may need to use a pesticide. There are several strategies when it comes to chemical management of cockroaches. In an IPM program, broadcast sprays are not used for cockroach control, so we won't cover them here. In fact, many school districts require that written notification be sent to *all parents* prior to a spray insecticide being used in a school. Yes teachers, that means that if you are spraying over the counter pesticides in the classroom, you may be breaking a district policy. There are insecticides that are considered to be lower in toxicity and are used only in targeted areas out of reach of children. In school districts with a pesticide notification policy, these “least toxic” pesticides are exempt from the parental notification. These exempt pesticides are the ones we will cover. Generally there are three types of chemicals used in an IPM program for cockroach management, dusts, baits, and insect growth regulators. All should be applied according to their label and only by licensed professionals.

Because of misapplication, dusts are *not* recommended for use in schools. Instead, we recommend a combination of baits and growth regulators. Baits are slow acting metabolic toxins combined with an attractive cockroach food source. Baits are generally applied as pea sized pellets. This allows for multiple feeding spots for the cockroaches. *Bait that is placed like caulk is not attractive to cockroaches, is unseemly, and dries out quickly.* When you are considering using a bait, think about where you would want to place a cockroach food source. It would need to be near the harborage where cockroaches would forage, and would need to be out of sight.

Cockroach Baiting Continued

Remember, you should only apply bait when you have a confirmed infestation. Applying bait as a “preventative,” is not part of an IPM program and is a waste of product. Think about this. *If there are no cockroaches in the area, why would you want to attract them with a food source?*

Baits are generally applied as a gel or dry flowable into cracks or crevices or can be applied in a station. *Note: Bait should be placed in cracks and crevices, not near them.*

Bait stations contain relatively large quantities of bait that are protected from contamination. The plastic bait containers are child resistant and are placed in areas where cockroaches forage. Bait stations should be placed along edges or in corners and should be placed horizontally on a surface. Bait stations have a sticky glue on the back so they may be temporarily fixed in place. Like monitors, bait stations should be dated when placed.

Gel baits are placed using a bait gun or a syringe type applicator. The gel bait is applied into cracks and crevices in small pea sized amounts. This gel bait is not protected from contamination, so care must be taken that sprays or dusts have not been recently used in the application area. Baits should not be stored with other insecticides, and keep in mind that nicotine on the hands or near the bait, like in a vehicle, will contaminate the bait and make it unattractive to the cockroaches. The gel is applied directly into harborages, so is likely to be contacted by the pest. Bait is usually attractive for about 3 months and then should be removed. Keep in mind that baits are insecticides. To reduce the chance of developing resistant or averse cockroach populations, you should rotate your baits several times a year.



Figure 6. Improper bait placement.
(photo courtesy of Wayne Walker)

Where to apply cockroach bait

- Baits should be placed near colonies, generally 3-4 feet on either side of a monitor that caught cockroaches. Bait should only be applied in arrears of confirmed infestations.
- Baits can be placed in cracks and crevices, in cabinet hinges, in corners of drawers, and along edges. Avoid hot areas like around stoves.
- Baits are a food source for the insect, so should be placed out of sight of the customer.
- When placing baits in or near electrical equipment, be sure to use the plastic tip on your bait gun.



Figure 7. Area under kitchen counter where heat from the nearby stove has melted the bait. Note that the bait has dripped down to the edge of the frame.

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<http://schoolipm.ifas.ufl.edu>

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