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HOMEMAKERS' CHAT

Saturday, August 26, 1939

(For Broadcast Use Only)

Subject: "COCKROACH NEWS." Information from Dr. E. A. Back of the Bureau of Entomology and Plant Quarantine, United States Department of Agriculture. Free publication available: "Cockroaches and Their Control," Leaflet 144,

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Though the history books don't mention it, cockroaches are among the world's greatest travellers. They're the cleverest of stowaways and hitch-hikers. Free of charge, they cross the seas on liners, freighters, Chinese junks or any other boat where they find food and shelter. On land they travel by train or automobile, hidden in luggage, in clothing, in packages of laundry or market baskets from the grocery stores.

The brown American cockroach has made its way from kitchen to kitchen and State to State until almost every housewife recognizes it. Beside this native roach, immigrants from the far ends of the earth are settled and prospering in many American kitchens. The big brown roach with a yellow line on its wings that you may see running to cover behind the sink has ancestors that sailed from far-away Australia and probably weathered storm and famine before reaching these shores. The smaller "black beetles" hiding under the kitchen water pipes or in damp corners of the cellar had great-grandparents that smuggled in from the Orient. The lively little brown "croton bug" or "water bug" comes of a family that once ate pumpernickel in Germany.

And now, as if housewives weren't troubled enough with American, Australian, Oriental, and German roaches, still another member of the family is appearing in northern households. Up from the Tropics has come a cockroach so cosmopolitan that it is known in most of the hot damp cities of the world. Though this roach has long been a familiar pest in southern homes in our Gulf Coast region, it has only



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appeared north in recent years. But lately it has been reported in homes as far apart as Nebraska and Illinois.

The tropical roach is even smaller than the German "croton bug" -- only three-eighths to a half an inch long. And you recognize it by two cross bands of light yellow on the back. By the way, if you do recognize it, Department of Agriculture entomologists would like to have you write and report it to them. They don't know whether this insect of the tropics will survive up North, even in heated buildings, and become a serious pest. But they're keeping tabs on it. People who have already reported say they have found tropical cockroaches near food and also collected in furniture, in corners of rooms, and in lockers.

Apparently the tropical cockroach has travelled north in style. The entomologists believe that it has probably been coming up in the luggage of autoists who have spent the winter in southern Florida. If it prospers up North, it will add another cockroach family to the great army that already has proved so annoying, destructive and expensive. Already cockroaches cost the American public thousands of dollars annually. They are troublesome not only in homes but also in restaurants, hotels, stores, factories and libraries. They damage food, book-bindings and fine fabrics. They carry disease and pollute foods. Wherever they run--over dishes, food or shelves, they leave a sickening roachy odor.

If you want to know how to get rid of cockroaches--whether they are American, Australian, Oriental, German or tropical cockroaches--write to the Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C., and ask for the free leaflet on these insects. The name of the leaflet is: "Cockroaches and Their Control," the number of the leaflet is 144. As long as the supply lasts, copies are free for the asking.

According to this leaflet, one of the ways to avoid roach trouble is to watch all baskets or boxes of food and laundry as they come into the house. Roaches hide in such packages and so get a free ride into your home. Kill any stray roaches you

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find. Use a fly swatter, or a folded paper, or crush them with your shoe whatever is quickest. Kill them before they can escape and settle themselves in your kitchen or pantry.

If they have already become pests in your house, you'll find sodium fluoride powder the best all-round roach remedy. But sodium fluoride powder is a poison so keep it out of reach of children and pets. Sprinkle the powder along the back of shelves and drainboards where roaches run, and dust or blow it into cracks and crannies where they hide. Put the powder out in the evening so it will be fresh when the roaches come out after dark to feed. Fresh pyrethrum powder is another effective roach remedy. When roaches are not too thick, you can also use phosphorus pastes. Wherever you can hit the insect with spray, you'll find the ordinary kerosene oil and pyrethrum and a hand spray-gun helpful.

With roaches as with most other household pests, starvation is an effective remedy, too. Keep all cracks, drawers and shelves clean of all traces of food. And keep food in tight insect-proof containers. Keep all garbage in a tight container. Roaches won't linger long where they can't find food.

But you'll find all this information and much more about getting rid of roaches in that free leaflet. Let me repeat that the leaflet is: "Cockroaches and Their Control," No. 144, free from the Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C.

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