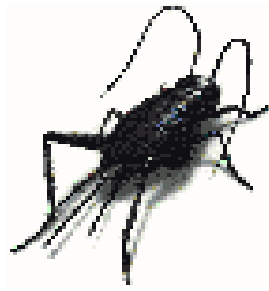


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# CRICKET MANAGEMENT



Several kinds of crickets are found in Arizona. Depending on which you have, you may expect different kinds of indoor or outdoor damage. While all kinds of crickets may be considered a nuisance because of their "chirping," none of them bites or carries diseases.

## Life Cycle

Crickets mate and lay eggs in the soil in the late summer before succumbing to old age or freezing temperatures. The eggs over-winter in the soil and hatch in late spring or early summer. The tiny immature crickets, called nymphs, look exactly like the adults (except they have no wings) and feed on the same types of food. Within approximately 90 days the nymphs mature into adults.

## Indian House Crickets

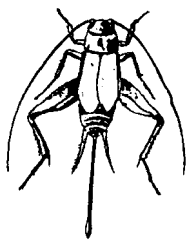


*Indian House  
Cricket*

**Description:** Light yellowish-brown or tan in color with darker bands and spots, about 3/4-inch long when mature; these are the most common and troublesome crickets. They often gather around foundations and doors outside and readily come inside through cracks or openings. They are the only type of cricket that may live and produce young indoors. They typically hide during the day and come out at night to feed on crumbs, pet food, and plant debris.

**Problems:** Indian House Crickets are primarily nuisance pests. The males attract females by "chirping" at night, which can be extremely annoying for homeowners. The "chirping" sound is produced by the males rubbing their wings together. These crickets also may produce piles of unsightly droppings. When there are extremely high numbers of Indian house crickets they may feed on fabrics and drywall. Outdoors, they may damage young garden plants and annual flowers.

## Field Crickets



*Field Cricket*

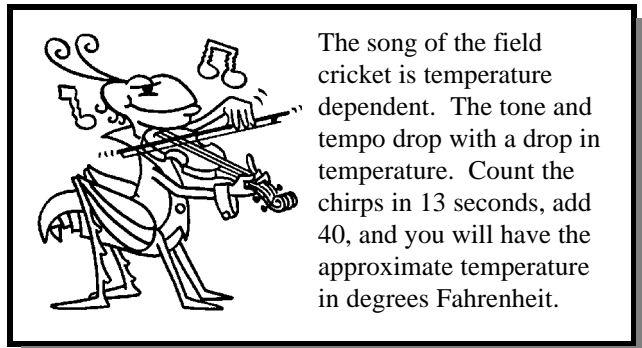
**Description:** Larger than Indian house crickets (slightly more than 1 inch when mature) and usually dark brown to shiny black in color, field crickets also enter houses and buildings. These crickets prefer to

## At a Glance

- \* Indian House Crickets and Field Crickets are the two most common crickets in Maricopa County.
- \* These crickets do not bite or carry diseases.
- \* To manage cricket populations:
  - prevent their entry into the house by sealing cracks & openings;
  - reduce food supply, put away pet food & keep kitchen clean;
  - remove them from the house by squashing or trapping;
  - encourage natural predators (cats, lizards, birds, spiders);
  - if pesticides are used, select ones labeled for crickets & follow the directions on the label.

live and breed outdoors where they feed on several kinds of plants. Occasionally they invade homes in search of hiding places but do not produce young indoors.

**Problems:** Field crickets are known to chew on and damage woolens, cottons, silks, synthetic fabrics, furs and carpeting. Clothes with perspiration stains or food spills are particularly attractive. Outdoors, they may damage young garden plants and annual flowers.



## Jerusalem Crickets

**Description:** Rarely found in Arizona, they are sometimes called "children of the earth" because their oversized, round head with two, bead-like, black eyes gives them a fancied resemblance to a miniature child. They are pale yellow to brown in color. These crickets are wingless as adults and have large, stout legs with spines at their tips used for burrowing into the soil. Jerusalem crickets are active at night and seldom seen, except by gardeners digging in the soil.



*Jerusalem Cricket*

**No Significant Problems:** Unlike other crickets, they are useful predators, catching and eating many other insects and spiders. Jerusalem crickets are mostly harmless, except they may bite if handled too carelessly. They do not enter homes.

## Cricket Management

Use Integrated Pest Management (IPM) strategies to address cricket problems. There is no single, perfect solution for the control of crickets. Often some combination of the following suggestions will work. Begin with the least toxic strategies at the top of the list and only move down the list when necessary. The further down the list you go, the greater the environmental impact. **Is there a problem?** First determine if there has been enough cricket damage to warrant control. Only you can decide how many crickets are too many.

## Cultural Strategies

Prevention is the easiest way to manage cricket problems. Insect-proof your house by preventing entry, eliminating food and water sources, and limiting the use of night lighting which attracts insects.

- \* Use caulking and weather-stripping to fill all openings, cracks, gaps, and holes in foundation, siding, windows, doors, screens, and other possible entry points.
- \* Remove vegetation and debris that could serve as a hiding place or breeding site near the house.
- \* Keep all doors closed at night. Make sure all doors (including screen and garage doors) are tight-fitting.
- \* Keep lights off at night as much as possible.
- \* Put pet food away & keep kitchen clean
- \* Check potted plants for Indian House Crickets.

## Mechanical Strategies

**Physically kill or remove crickets:** There are many non-toxic methods for managing cricket populations.

- \* Fly swatter
- \* Vacuum cleaner
- \* Heavy shoe
- \* Sticky traps

Apply Diatomaceous Earth (DE) between walls and other places where crickets hide during the day as well as to areas through which crickets walk. This abrasive, fine, white powder is actually tiny sharp fossil shells which will gradually wear through the cricket's outer shell, causing it to dehydrate and die. Wear a dust mask during application to prevent inhaling which could lead to respiratory problems.

## Biological Strategies

**Encourage natural predators:** Many cats prey on crickets and keep indoor populations down. Keep cricket numbers down outdoors by encouraging natural enemies like lizards, birds, and harmless spiders.

## Chemical Strategies

**Apply a crack & crevice treatment:** Boric acid or other pesticide applied to cracks and holes will kill crickets that pass through the barrier.

**Pesticide application:** If populations are high and you choose to treat with residual sprays, apply after 10:00 p.m. to foundations, baseboards, in closets, under stairways and wherever cricket hiding places are found. Applications made in early summer when crickets are small are more effective than late summer applications. If you use pesticides, select one that is labeled for use on crickets. Always read and follow carefully the instructions on the container label.

**URL:** <http://ag.arizona.edu/extension/pubs/garden/az1004.pdf>

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