

## The Cricket

House crickets are insects and belong to the order Orthoptera, and family Gryllidae (true crickets). Crickets are omnivorous, eating both vegetable and animal matter. Their life span is dependent on temperature and environmental conditions, but they generally live for 2-3 months. Higher temperatures will decrease their life span but increase growth rate. A cricket will usually reach sexual maturity around 5-6 weeks depending on temperate and environmental conditions. The short lifecycle of the cricket means that they must continually produce young crickets to maintain the colony.



As the crickets grow they need to shed their skin (moulting) having a number of nymph stages. A cricket that has moulted is white/yellow in colour and is susceptible to being eaten until its exoskeleton (outer body casing) hardens.

When conditions are suitable the house cricket can lay eggs every second week throughout most of their adult life. Productive females can lay approximately 200 eggs in a batch. Eggs are whitish/yellow in colour and around 2-3mm long. A female cricket can produce approximately 600 or more eggs over her lifetime. Eggs hatch approximately 11-14 days later (when bred at around 30 degrees Celsius). The young are approximately 2-3mm in length and are small replicates of their parents called pinheads or nymphs.

While they can survive a range of temperatures, they breed and grow best when temperatures are consistently between the range of 32-35 degrees Celsius. Crickets are nocturnal in the wild, though in captivity they are active all times of the day and do not require lighting.

There are many methods for dealing with crickets, such as baits, traps and sprays. If you have a cricket problem you should also maintain a rigorous cleaning routine, including frequent vacuuming and ensuring your rubbish bins are sealed, as the smell can attract crickets. It is also important to seal up crevices and cracks where crickets can breed and to ensure that plants, bushes and grass are kept trimmed back so there is nowhere for them to nest. As always, for a serious infestation it is best to contact a professional pest control company with the knowledge and experience to deal with the problem – such as Bird and Pest Solutions.

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