

# Getting Rid of Roaches

## Without Toxic Chemicals

A fact sheet from Toxic Free NC

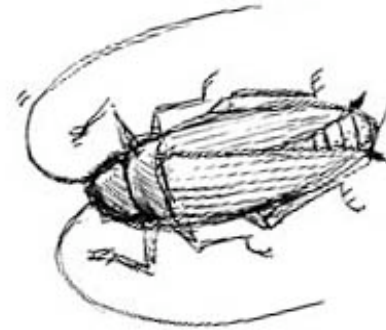
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Cockroaches are the number one pest of homes and other buildings in the United States.

Species commonly seen in North Carolina include:  
German Cockroach – A medium sized, light brown roach that reproduces very quickly. It especially likes kitchens and bathrooms.

American Cockroach, a.k.a. “palmetto bug” or “water bug” – A very large reddish brown roach that has wings and will sometimes fly. Lives outdoors, but likes warm wet places, and so will often come inside through drainpipes.

Smoky Brown Cockroach – A very large, dark brown or black roach. Likes to come into the house from woodpiles and other debris that may be nearby.



### Prevent cockroaches from coming inside in the first place:

1. **Roach-proof your food.** Cockroaches can easily get into plastic bags or cardboard boxes. Use roach-proof glass or plastic containers with tight-fitting lids to store your food.
2. **Roach-proof your trash.** Make sure that food waste in your garbage doesn't stick around. Rinse empty food containers before you throw them away or recycle them. Don't leave food scraps in the garbage overnight. Take out the trash often.
3. **Don't give roaches water.** Fix leaky pipes and faucets, air out or dehumidify moist areas of the house, and empty your pets' water dishes at night. If your building has a serious roach problem, you can also cover your drains at night so roaches can't crawl up them.
4. **De-grease.** Roaches love grease and grime, so it's especially important to keep your kitchen clean. Don't leave dishes in the sink overnight, and clean your countertops, drains, ovens, stovetops, and vents regularly so grease doesn't build up.
5. **No place to hide.** Seal up cracks and crevices that give roaches a way into your house. Use caulk to seal the cracks between walls and floors, around windows and doorframes, and around cupboards and bathroom fixtures. You might also install door sweeps and weather stripping.

### Get rid of cockroaches without toxic chemicals:

1. **Vacuum them.** You can use a good strong vacuum cleaner ...  
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to suck roaches out of cracks and out from underneath appliances. Then, just throw out the vacuum bag right away.

2. **Borax.** Borax is a low-toxicity chemical powder that kills roaches when they eat it, but won't vaporize into gas, and is safe to handle. However, inhaling large amounts of the powder can irritate your lungs, so be careful and wear a mask if you are working with large amounts of it. You can sprinkle the dry boric acid powder in the back of cabinets, underneath appliances, or in other cracks and crevices where roaches will easily find it. Or, you can use it to make your own roach bait... As with all potentially hazardous materials, store boric acid away from children and pets.
3. **Make Your Own Roach Bait.** Recipe: Mix 1 cup borax powder, 1/4 cup sugar, 1/4 cup minced onion, 1 tablespoon cornstarch, and 1 tablespoon water. Make a paste out of the mixture, and roll it into little balls. Put 2 or 3 of the balls into a little plastic sandwich baggie, and leave the baggie open. Place the bag(s) anyplace you have roaches, like inside cabinets or drawers or under the sink. To be on the safe side, be careful not to put the bait anywhere that a pet or child could find it.