

Identification Guide

Recognizing droppings and signs of infestation
before you even call an exterminator

21 pages · 5 actual-size plates



Scan for a free
inspection

ParasiteMontréal · Certified pest management · Greater Montreal

parasitemontreal.ca 514 612-0083

What is in this guide

21 pages, including five actual-size plates. Go straight to what matches your situation.

Where to start

4

Identification key — three questions to find your page

What you found

5

Actual-size droppings · The deciding detail · Where you found them

Insects at actual size

8

Eleven species, exact size · Full bed bug life cycle

The signs, species by species

11

Bed bugs · Cockroaches · Rodents · Ants · Wasps

What is not a sign

16

Six false leads that cost money

Where to look in the building

17

Twelve inspection points in section

When it happens in the year

18

Seasonal calendar for Greater Montreal

Before you call

19

Red flags · Checklist

Free inspection, no obligation · reply in under 2 hours
parasitemontreal.ca/en/quote



How to use this guide

This guide answers one question: what is it that I just found? It follows the order in which people actually search — first what can be seen, then what can be heard, finally what the location tells you. You do not need to read it end to end: go straight to the section matching what you observed.

- **The plate on the next page is printed at actual size.**

Print it at 100% (not "fit to page") and set your find beside it. Size is the fastest and most reliable criterion, well ahead of colour.

- **Location counts as much as appearance.**

The same droppings found in a kitchen cabinet or in an attic do not tell the same story. Page 5 deals specifically with this.

- **Photograph before cleaning.**

Put a coin beside it for scale. Once the area is cleaned the information is gone and the diagnosis becomes far less certain.

A precaution before handling anything

Never sweep droppings dry and do not vacuum them: that puts particles into the air which are then inhaled. Dampen the area with a disinfectant, let it sit five minutes, pick up with paper towel, wear gloves. The risk lies in the handling, not in the mere presence.

Identification key: three questions

Answer in order. Each answer sends you to the page dealing precisely with your case.

Does what you found move?

No — it is a trace

Yes — it is an animal or an insect

What kind of trace is it?

Pellets or droppings

Actual-size droppings plate

5

Black dots on a mattress

Bed bug signs

11

Fine sawdust at a wall base

Carpenter ants

14

Noise in a partition, no trace

Rodents: noises and marks

13

How big is it?

Under 5 mm

Insect plate: bed bug, flea, tick, carpet beetle

8

5 to 20 mm

Insect plate: ants, silverfish, German cockroach

8

Over 20 mm

Insect plate: American cockroach or wasps

15

If you are still unsure after these three questions, that is normal: several species look very similar at this stage. Photograph with a coin for scale and call us — identification over the phone is free.

Not sure about your identification? Send us a photo, free of charge
parasitemontreal.ca/en/quote



Droppings: actual-size plate

Each shape below is drawn at its real size. Print this page at 100% to compare directly.

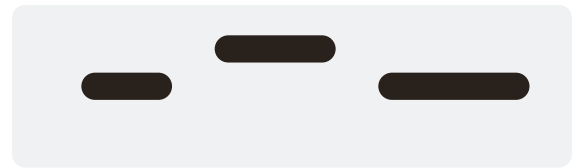
Mouse

3 to 6 mm · tapered at both ends · black when fresh



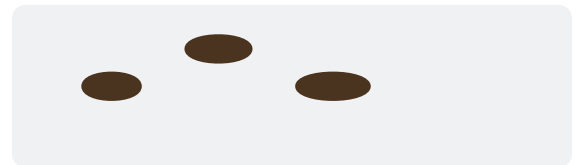
Rat (Norway rat)

12 to 20 mm · blunt ends · capsule-shaped



Squirrel

8 to 10 mm · barrel-shaped · lighter brown



Bat

6 to 12 mm · crumbles · shiny insect fragments



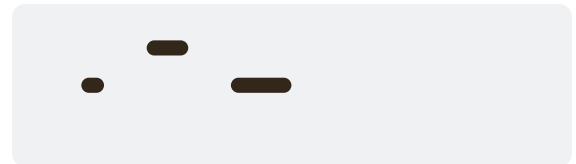
German cockroach

1 to 2 mm · like ground pepper · in clusters



American cockroach

3 to 8 mm · lengthwise ridges · squared ends



reference ruler (mm)

The simplest test: a mouse dropping sits on the edge of a dime. A rat dropping does not.

Not sure about your identification? Send us a photo, free of charge

Rodent control: mice and rats



The deciding detail, species by species

When size leaves room for doubt, one unique detail settles it. Here is which one, for each species.

Species	What gives it away for certain
Mouse	Both ends are pointed. No other species on this list has both ends tapered.
Rat	Size, simply. From 12 mm up, no mouse is involved.
Squirrel	Barrel shape, wider relative to length than a rat's, and almost always found up high.
Bat	Crumbles between the fingers and glints in light: undigested insect wing fragments.
German cockroach	Under magnification, lengthwise marks on grains under 2 mm, never isolated.
American cockroach	Cleanly cut ends, as if sectioned, with visible lengthwise ridges.

Do not confuse: mouse and bat droppings are the same size. The test is crumbling — bat droppings crush into a shiny powder, mouse droppings stay firm.

Everything about this treatment, timelines, and pricing

Rodent control: mice and rats



Where you find them changes the diagnosis

The same dropping does not mean the same thing depending on where it sits. Location, more than appearance, often gives the answer.

Where	Likely species
Along baseboards, in a line	Mouse. They follow walls and never cross an open room.
In cabinets, near food	Mouse, or cockroach if the grains are under 2 mm.
In the basement, near drains	Rat, or Oriental cockroach. Check for dried-out floor traps.
In the attic, in concentrated piles	Bat. A pile under one specific roof point marks a roost.
In the attic, scattered with compacted insulation	Squirrel or mouse. Look for a damaged soffit opening.
Behind the fridge or the stove	German cockroach, almost every time.
On a beam, in a line beneath it	Bat in transit. The roost is directly above.

Free inspection, no obligation · reply in under 2 hours
parasitemontreal.ca/en/quote



Insects: actual-size plate

Eleven species drawn at their exact size, seen from above. Print at 100% and compare directly. Body, leg, and antenna proportions are to scale.

Bed bug, adult

5 mm · flat oval · mahogany brown



Bed bug, nymph

1.6 mm · translucent · nearly invisible



Carpet beetle

3 mm · domed · often mistaken for a bed bug



Flea

2.6 mm · flattened side to side · jumps



Tick, unfed

3.4 mm · flat · eight legs



Tick, engorged

up to 10 mm · grey and swollen



Pharaoh ant

2 mm · yellowish · in buildings



reference ruler (mm)

The classic trap: the carpet beetle is mistaken for a bed bug in one case out of three. The carpet beetle is domed like a miniature ladybug; the bed bug is flat like an apple seed.

Not sure about your identification? Send us a photo, free of charge
Bed bug extermination



Insects: actual-size plate (2)

Carpenter ant

6 to 13 mm · black · the largest here



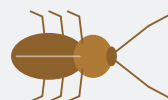
Silverfish

13 mm · silvery · three tail filaments



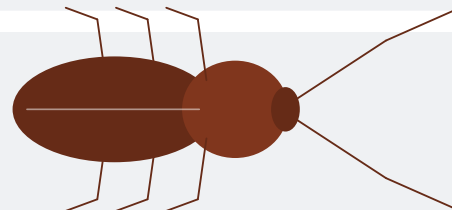
German cockroach

14 mm · two dark stripes behind the head



American cockroach

38 mm · the largest · comes from sewers



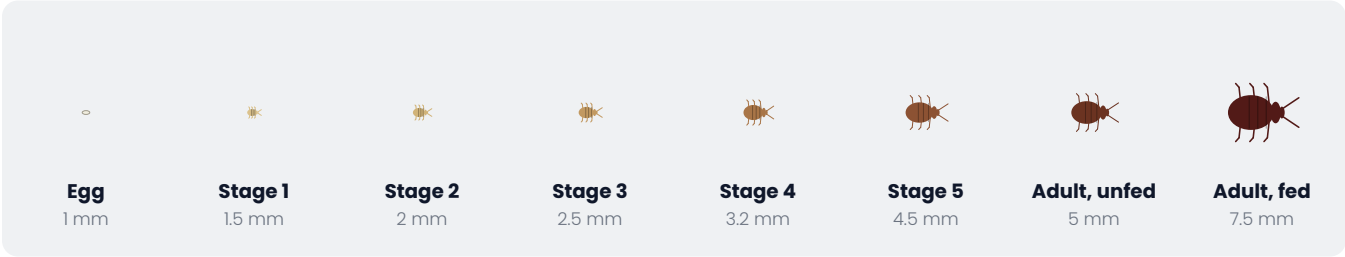
reference ruler (mm)

Everything about this treatment, timelines, and pricing
Cockroach extermination



Bed bug: the whole life cycle, at actual size

This is the question we get most: "is this it?" The early stages are translucent and tiny — which is why they get missed. Here are the eight forms at their exact size.



Between each stage the insect must take a blood meal and leaves a moult behind. Five moults found on site mean at least five weeks of development: the problem is older than it looks.

Detailed preparation instructions, room by room
Bed bug extermination



Bed bugs: the signs, in the order you look for them

Bites are the best-known and least reliable sign: close to three people in ten do not react at all, and many skin reactions come from something else. Start with the physical evidence.

- **1. Black dots on the mattress seam**

Digested blood droppings, grouped along seams and under the label. Rubbed with a damp cloth they smear and leave a rust-coloured halo.

- **2. Translucent moults**

Empty amber shells keeping the insect's full shape. Their presence proves the population is breeding on site.

- **3. Blood spots on the sheets**

Two to four millimetres, rust brown, in different places from one night to the next — near the shoulders, neck, and upper back.

- **4. Sweet, slightly rancid smell**

Noticeable on entering the bedroom in the morning. A late sign: it means the population is already substantial.

- **5. A live bug away from the bed**

More than three metres from the bed means the nearby harbourage is saturated. The scale of treatment changes.

Detailed preparation instructions, room by room
Bed bug extermination



Cockroaches: what you see before you see the insect

Cockroaches are nocturnal and stay hidden as long as harbourage suffices. Seeing one in daylight means the hiding places are saturated.

- **Black grains under 2 mm**

Always in clusters, never isolated, in cabinet corners, hinges, and drawer grooves.

- **Brown smears along grooves**

A dark greasy deposit left by repeated traffic, especially behind appliances.

- **Egg capsules (oothecae)**

About 8 mm, light brown, ridged bean shape, glued in a crack or under a lip. No insecticide penetrates them.

- **A rancid oil smell**

Distinctive and persistent in closed cabinets, even after cleaning.

- **A roach visible in daylight**

Treat as a signal of advanced infestation, not an isolated incident.

Rodents: the signs other than droppings

Droppings confirm presence. These four signs tell you how old and how large the problem is — and therefore how urgent.

- **Grease marks along walls**

A dark, burnished band a few centimetres off the floor. It builds over months of repeated traffic: an established population, not a recent passage.

- **Gnawing on wood or plastic**

Two parallel grooves under 2 mm indicate a mouse; wider and deeper, a rat.

- **Noises: the hour identifies the animal**

From dusk through the middle of the night, a rodent. At dawn and late afternoon with silence at night, a squirrel.

- **Ammonia smell**

A sign of accumulated urine, therefore a long-established population. Grounds for prompt intervention.

Everything about this treatment, timelines, and pricing

Rodent control: mice and rats



Carpenter ants: three concrete signs

The carpenter ant does not eat wood: it excavates smooth galleries to house its colony, favouring wood dampened by a leak. Its presence therefore often signals a water problem to correct in parallel.

- **Very fine sawdust at the base of a wall**

It contains insect fragments, which distinguishes it from construction sawdust. It is gallery spoil.

- **Detached wings on a window sill**

Reproductives have swarmed. If it comes from inside, a nest has been established in the structure for at least two years.

- **A rustling sound inside a partition**

Audible at night in silence, often described as cellophane. It comes from an area of damp wood.

Everything about this treatment, timelines, and pricing

Ant treatment



Wasps, hornets, and bees: do not target the wrong one

This distinction has an immediate practical consequence: a bee colony is not destroyed, it is recovered — often free of charge by a beekeeper.

- **Honeybee**

Hairy, stocky, golden brown, slow flight from flower to flower. To be recovered, never treated.

- **Wasp**

Hairless, slender, marked waist, nervous flight. Intervention justified when the nest sits in a traffic area.

- **Hornet**

A large wasp. Its sting is not barbed, so repeated stings are possible.

- **Ground-level traffic in and out**

An underground yellowjacket nest. The most dangerous configuration: you find it while mowing.

Urgent situation? Call us — same-day service when available

Wasp and hornet nests



What is not a sign of infestation

A good share of the calls we get concern false leads. Knowing how to rule them out avoids needless expense.

- **A spider in the bathtub**

It fell in and cannot climb out. One isolated spider indicates nothing at all.

- **Sowbugs in the basement**

They signal excess moisture, not an infestation. Fix the moisture and they leave.

- **Bites on waking, with no other sign**

Not enough to conclude bed bugs. No serious technician will bill a treatment on that basis alone.

- **A single ant in April**

It is scouting. A continuous, organized trail is what indicates a colony.

- **Flies in winter**

Almost always a dead animal in a cavity, not a fly infestation. The source is what must be found.

- **Earwigs under a flowerpot**

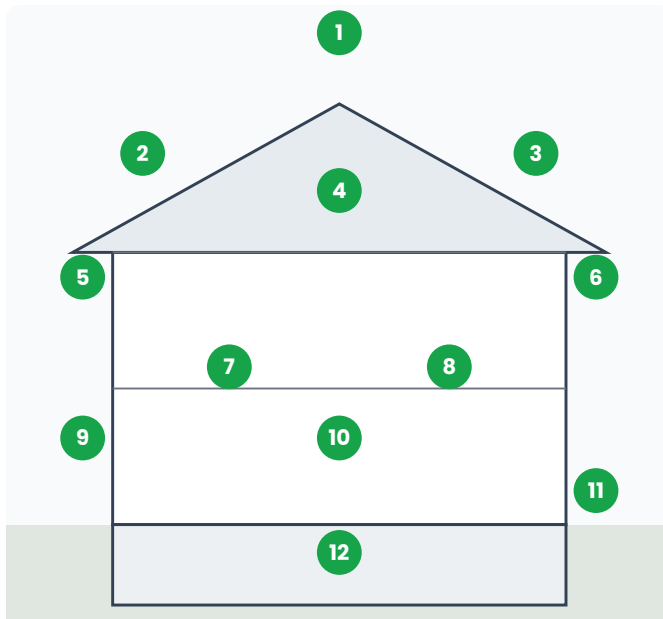
They live outdoors. Their presence indoors is accidental.

Not sure about your identification? Send us a photo, free of charge
parasitemontreal.ca/en/quote



Where to look: twelve inspection points

These are the places our technicians check, in this order. Nine infestations out of ten start at one of them.



- 1 Ridge and roof vents – bats, squirrels
- 2 Left soffit return – wasps, squirrels
- 3 Right soffit return – wasps, birds
- 4 Attic, compacted insulation – rodents, bats
- 5 Gutter and flashing – carpenter ants (dampened wood)
- 6 Window frame, screen – flying insects, spiders
- 7 Service penetrations – mice (six millimetres is enough)
- 8 Dryer vent with no flap – rodents, birds
- 9 Foundation-to-siding joint – mice, ants, sowbugs
- 10 Door threshold, worn sweep – mice, crawling insects
- 11 Firewood stacked against the wall – carpenter ants
- 12 Window well, drain, crawl space – rats, Oriental cockroaches

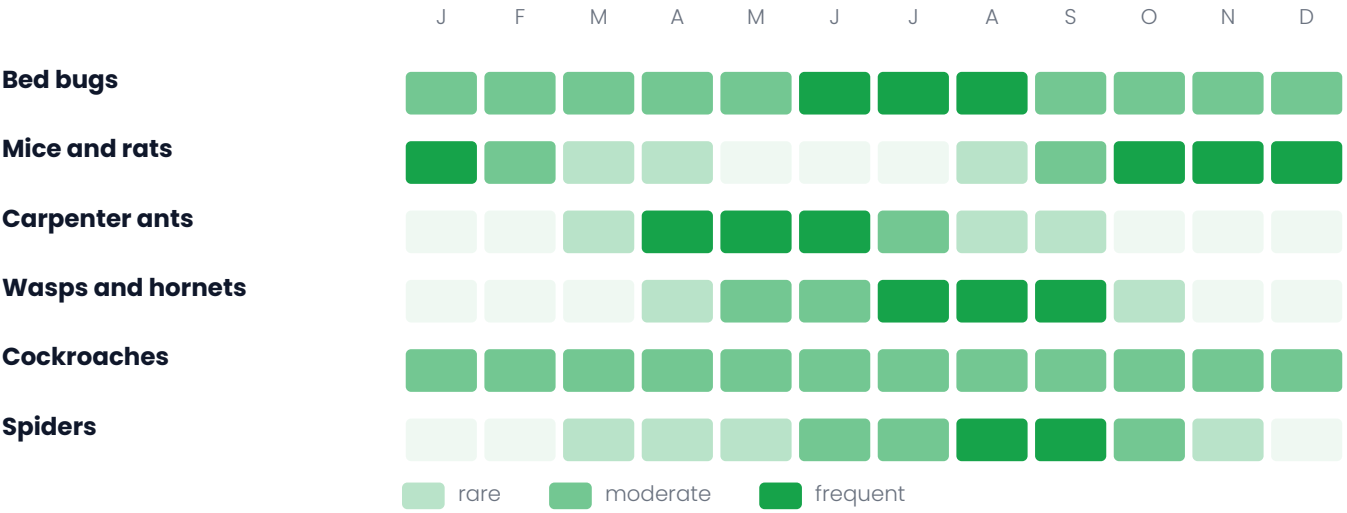
Points 7, 9, and 10 alone account for most rodent entries. Sealing them in spring costs a few dollars; the same infestation treated in November costs a full intervention.

Free inspection, no obligation · reply in under 2 hours
parasitemontreal.ca/en/quote



When it happens: Greater Montreal calendar

The local calendar is stable from year to year. The darker the bar, the more reports we receive at that time.



Two windows matter more than the rest. In April and May, wasp queens look for shelter and ants become active again: the most cost-effective moment to seal. In September and October, rodents seek warmth from the first cold nights.

Free inspection, no obligation · reply in under 2 hours
parasitemontreal.ca/en/quote



When to call without waiting

These six situations do not warrant a period of observation.

A noise inside a partition carrying electrical wiring.

An ammonia smell accompanying a noise: accumulated urine, established population.

A wasp nest in a traffic area, or an allergic person in the building.

Droppings in a food preparation area, at home or in a business.

A neighbour on the same floor or landing recently treated for bugs or roaches.

Signs in a home occupied by a young child or an immunocompromised person.

Urgent situation? Call us — same-day service when available
parasitemontreal.ca/en/quote



What to note before calling

These five pieces of information are worth more than a long description over the phone. They often allow the right equipment to be brought on the first visit.

☐ What you observed, and exactly where

☐ Since when – approximate first sighting

☐ Building type: detached house, plex, apartment building

☐ Time of day of any noises

☐ Pets in the home

Note also whether a neighbour was treated recently: in a building, that is the information that most often changes the intervention plan.

Free inspection, no obligation · reply in under 2 hours
parasitemontreal.ca/en/quote



The inspection is free

This guide helps you understand what you found. It does not replace an on-site inspection: identifying a species from a trace requires seeing the whole context, and that is exactly what a technician does on a visit.

The inspection is free and without obligation. It serves to identify the species, measure the real extent, and produce a firm quote — not to sell a treatment decided in advance.

Request a quote · parasitemontreal.ca

514 612-0083

Bed bug extermination
Rodent control: mice and rats
Cockroach extermination
Ant treatment
Wasp and hornet nests



Scan for a free
inspection

Informational document. Does not replace medical, veterinary, or legal advice. In case of an allergic reaction, a high-risk sting, or an unusual symptom, consult a healthcare professional.