

Black Field cricket (*Teleogryllus commodus*)



Size and Colour:

Adult black field crickets are about 2.5 cm long and are actually dark brown. They have large heads with very long antennae. They have wings and although they generally do not fly there are occasional mass flights when numbers are high. Females have a long ovipositor (egg-laying tube) which extends past and under the wings. The adult males “chirp”, by rubbing their wings together.

Life Cycle:

There is just one generation a year but the life stages overlap. Eggs, which are white, ovoid-shaped, and about 0.3 cm long are laid singly, but loosely clustered, about 1 cm deep in damp soil. A single female cricket is capable of laying up to 2000 eggs between mid-February and early May. After hatching the nymphs take 2-4 months to mature into adults and then live for 2-3 months. The nymphs pass through 9-10 stages and resemble small adults but do not have wings, or in the case of females, ovipositors, until the 8th and 9th stages. Overwintering occurs as eggs. The smaller nymphs live and hide within pasture and this makes them difficult to detect. Larger nymphs and adults tend to shelter in cracks in soil or under cow pats and litter

Distribution:

Although found throughout the North Island and milder coastal regions of the South Island they are usually only economically important in Northland, Auckland, Waikato, Bay of Plenty, Hawkes Bay, Taranaki and Manawatu. Black field crickets, especially the nymphs, are often confused with several species of much smaller native crickets. These only grow to about 1 cm and crickets larger than this are likely to be black field crickets. Native crickets are also active during the day and when disturbed will jump and be easily seen. In contrast black field crickets are active at night and if disturbed during the day will run for shelter and remain hidden. When threatened they will jump quickly away. Black field crickets can also be identified by a distinctive white band around their middle.

Best preventative practices:

Exclusion:

Interception and prevention of entry into critical areas is the first and most obvious way to prevent black cricket. Seal all potential entry points with sealant, flashing, compressive strips or other means. Black beetle can squeeze through small cracks and gaps. Repair any holes and gaps in walls, floors etc. Gaps larger than 5mm deep can permit entry. Door and light control (where feasible) is desirable during the flight season.

Sanitation:

Black cricket infestations are not a reflection of poor hygiene and sanitation conditions.

Suppression: Inspection, monitoring and treatment of harbourages and entry points in vicinity when detected with approved methods of control. Barrier treatment can assist but it is possible to still enter the structure before succumbing.

Control:

Populations of more than 10 crickets per m² are economically damaging. Control of black field crickets is usually by using grain baits coated with an insecticide (maldison).

For more information consult the [New Zealand Agrichemical Manual](#) or an agrichemical company representative or talk to your PMANZ Pest Management Technician.