

How to keep and breed the Turkistan Cockroach



All you need to know about keeping and breeding
Blatta lateralis

By
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Blatta lateralis is a species of cockroach that is native to the Middle East. It is a relatively small feeder cockroach reaching around 3cm as an adult with a lifespan between 12 – 18 months.



Picture showing *Blatta lateralis* at various ages from small to mature

These cockroaches mature at between 3 -5 months of age. As the cockroach grows, it will shed its skin. Newly shed cockroaches are yellow in colouration.



Picture of newly shed cockroach (left) and old skin (right)

Adult males can be differentiated from the females by their wings and light red colouration. Females are dark red to black in colouration without wings.



Picture showing a mature male above and mature female below

These cockroaches are very popular because they can't climb and they don't smell.

Blatta lateralis lay small ootheca that contain between 20 – 30 eggs.



Pictures of female *Blatta lateralis* carrying an ootheca

The eggs hatch between 30 – 150 days depending on temperature and humidity. I have found with temperatures in the mid 30's and with a humidity of 60% that the ootheca start to hatch in 60 days.



Picture of a few ootheca. Freshly laid ootheca are light in colouration and darken with time.

These cockroaches are easy to breed. A simple plastic container with a lid can be used to house and breed these cockroaches. The amount of cockroaches you plan to keep and breed, will determine the size of the enclosure you choose to use. A few hundred cockroaches can be kept in a 90L container. Make sure there are plenty ventilation holes.



Newly hatched *Blatta lateralis*



Picture of cockroach breeding drawers

As mentioned before these cockroaches can't climb. Depending on how many cockroaches you plan on breeding, will determine the type of set-up you use. I breed plenty of cockroaches so I use a multiple drawer system.

Substrate isn't important. I use newspaper as a substrate. The beauty of these cockroaches is that they do not stink and they are not messy, so cleaning isn't a regular time consuming exercise.



A colony of sub-adult *Blatta lateralis*

Egg trays can be used for the cockroaches to hide under. I have found that polystyrene cups also do the trick, either standing them up or lying them on their side.



Group of sub-adult *Blatta lateralis* hiding in a polystyrene cup

You can feed these cockroaches on a high protein dog pellet. Moisture can be given in the form of carrots or potatoes. Remember moisture and heat is conditions for mould. This shouldn't occur if there is sufficient ventilation. Make sure to remove pellets and carrots/potatoes if mould occurs.



Colony of adult *Blatta lateralis* in a breeding drawer. Newspaper as a substrate, polystyrene cups to hide in, carrot provided for moisture and dog pellets for food

Blatta lateralis is a tropical cockroach and they enjoy high temperatures. Keep your cockroaches at a minimum of 70F (21C) and optimally between 85 – 95F (29 – 35C). Heating can be achieved by using heating pads or heating cable. I have found best results keeping them in the mid 30's.



Picture of heating cable which heats each layer of drawers

Humidity should be kept in the mid range (around 60 - 70%).



Picture of a colony of *Blatta lateralis*. Humidity guage shows humidity to be about 70%

If your cockroaches die due to an incomplete molt, then the humidity is too low.



Pictures of *Blatta lateralis* that have recently shed

If your adult cockroaches are not breeding, then your temperature is too low.



Colony of adult male and female *Blatta lateralis*

These are the fastest reproducing of all the feeder cockroaches.