

Australian cockroach at Upper Thomson

Subject: Australian cockroach, *Periplaneta australasiae* (Insecta: Blattodea: Blattidae).

Subject identified by: Contributor.

Location, date and time: Singapore Island, Upper Thomson, at the edge of a golf course; 8 August 2009; 1712 hrs.

Habitat: Scrub and open parkland vegetation.

Observers: Contributor & Leong Tzi Ming.

Observations: One example of about 3 cm was found covered in a dusting of fine white particles and crawling in an apparently lethargic manner on the trunk of a Tembusu (*Fagraea fragrans*) tree at the edge of a golf course (see accompanying picture).

Remarks: The Australian cockroach appears similar to the American cockroach (*Periplaneta americana*) but can be easily distinguished by its bearing a pale yellow stripe laterally along the outer anterior margin of each forewing (Goh et al., 2002: 19). It is reputed to be a pest of buildings in many areas of the tropics, known for its propensity to feed on tender greenhouse plants (Teo, 1990: 178). In Singapore, *Periplaneta australasiae* is supposed to be common (Johnson, 1964: 29). It is regarded as a household pest and often occurs with *Periplaneta americana* (Ho, 1990: 454). However, Goh et al. (2002: 19) state that it is more commonly found outdoors in gardens and parks living in vegetation.

The contributor agrees with the latter opinion. In over a decade of observing cockroach diversity in Singapore, the featured record was his only encounter with this species on Singapore Island. He had never found the species in buildings, and never seen it co-occurring with *Periplaneta americana*, the latter species he notes to be ubiquitous and abundant in buildings in urban areas.



Photograph by Kelvin K. P. Lim

References:

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- Teo L. H., 1990. Biology of household insects. In: Chou L. M. & P. K. L. Ng (eds.). *Essays in Zoology*. Department of Zoology, National University of Singapore. pp. 177-187.

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