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Cockroach found at Kenilworth Training room kitchen 7 Aug 2014

Background

On 6 August 2014 I received a sample of two cockroaches that had been found at the Kenilworth Training room kitchen. On receipt, they were sealed in plastic and had begun to decompose.

Results

The two cockroaches were identified as the Surinam cockroach (*Pycnoscelus surinamensis*). This is an invasive species that has not yet been recorded from South Africa.



It is a tropical species that originates from Asia and Indomalaysian region. From there it has spread to most tropical islands of the world, Australia, South America, Southern USA and in Africa to the Congo and coastal Tanzania. It is thus of great interest to find this species now in South Africa. The cockroaches are slow-moving and generally burrow. They are parthenogenetic (no males) and their global spread is thought to be via transport of goods by humans.

Given their tropical origins, they may not establish in the colder parts of South Africa, although the subtropical climate in the eastern parts of the region would suit them. It is essential that the building in which they were found be subject to thorough fumigation. It is likely that the original contamination occurred via a boxed food product. If possible the packaging of all products used in the kitchen and originating from Asia or Malaysia should be inspected. Fumigation should be repeated at intervals to ensure that any remaining Surinam cockroaches are eliminated, to stop them establishing in South Africa.

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