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### ENTOMOLOGY

## Ancient Roach Named Biggest Pest in U.S.

► THE OBNOXIOUS cockroach which has been surviving for millions of years is still doing a superb job of avoiding extermination.

Named the biggest pest in the nation by the National Pest Control Association, the cockroach continues successfully to outwit nature and man.

Its extraordinary ability to adapt to changing environment, to resist chemicals and other lethal weapons, and its inherent craftiness are some of the factors that have allowed this scavenger to survive longer than any other insect.

Cockroach fossils have been discovered in ancient rocks dating back to the Carboniferous period—about 280 million years ago. Of the six orders of insects found in that coal-age period, all but one—the cockroach—have become extinct.

Today they have invaded the flour bins, sugar supplies, nooks and crannies of homes, industries, hospitals and other buildings.

Most of the 3,000 known species of cockroaches live in the tropics, with only about 75 species in the U.S. Among the latter, the German roach, according to the Pest Control, is the most obnoxious and adept at getting along with insecticides.

• Science News Letter, 85:30 Jan. 11, 1964

## Nature Note

► OFTEN NOTED for its fine wood, rich nectar, cream and gold flowers, and graceful form is the linden tree or basswood of the family Tiliaceae. The linden is easily distinguished in fall and early winter because of the persistence with which the seeds cling to the branches.

The fruits of the linden tree are among the most ingenious of the many kinds of air transportation provided by plants for the distribution of seeds. The seed-bearing stem is flanked on either side by a wide, leaf-like extension that runs out beyond its sharp angle at mid-length, forming a leafy parachute. It still extends its length considerably before branching in pairs and terminating in from one or two to six or seven hard, round berries.

This beautiful shade tree, with its heart-shaped leaves and rich fragrance when in midsummer bloom, has its origin in the word lind, Old English for lime tree. It is often called the bee tree because of the nectar found in its flowers and its wood has been favored by continental carvers for centuries, especially in religious motifs. The ancients used its soft inner tissues as an antiseptic for binding and healing wounds.

The fairly soft, straight-grained, light-colored wood of the American basswood is used in manufacturing venetian blinds, piano keys, luggage, millwork and especially, cabinets.

Linden trees reach a great size. A German town in Wurttemberg was named Neuenstadt an der grossen Linden because of its famous tree, nine feet in diameter.

• Science News Letter, 85:30 Jan. 11, 1964