

The Importance of Cockroaches

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Editorial

Volume 2 Issue 5

Received Date: October 17, 2019

Published Date: October 31, 2019

DOI: 10.23880/izab-16000183

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Cockroaches, including termites from epifamily Termitoidea (order Blattodea), have the second largest number of species compared to other Polyneoptera, approximately 7,570 described species, of which 4,641 are cockroaches [1]. Linnaeus, et al. [2] considered cockroaches within the order Coleoptera, in a single genus called *Blatta*, which in Latin means bookworm. The same author added that cockroaches in Russia and Finland consume bread as well as clothing, forcing residents to leave their homes and return only in the middle of winter, when cockroaches perish from the cold [3]. According to the authors, perhaps this is why cockroaches are popularly referred to as pests, but these insects are not as malignant as they are portrayed in movies, magazines, and the popular imagination. In fact cockroaches do better than we think.

These insects can be found on all continents, but usually inhabit the tropical region because these places have conditions suitable (temperature and humidity) to most living species today. They are present in the litter, under rotting logs, in the treetops, in hives, anthills and termite mounds, and even in caves. They are individuals that contribute to insect biomass because they are food sources for insectivorous animals and probably help in nutrient cycling in the ecosystem, as many cockroaches, although omnivorous, prefer decomposing plant matter and their feces mix with the soil. There are still some who have been observed acting as pollinators when feeding on pollen grains.

It is noteworthy that to combat the bad reputation that cockroaches have, it becomes necessary to disseminate scientific actions not only to the scientific community, but

to society in general, either through events held by research institutions or even actions aimed at bring this knowledge directly to classrooms, a role mediated between researchers with elementary and high school teachers.

A Brief History of the Order

Olivier, e al. [4] created the order Orthoptera and also inserted in it the genus *Blatta*. Subsequently, Leach [5] moved as a low price to a group he is called Dictyopter, later corrected to Dictyoptera de Navas. Serville, et al. [5] in a work on an Orthoptera order, created a Blattaria order and included 10 genera and 80 species. Later Brunner von Wattenwyl, et al. [6] created the subordinate Blattodea to group all tariffs. Mckittrick, et al. [7] from a comparative study of female and male genitalia and their musculature, considered the term Blattaria as suborder. Only Mackerras, et al. [8] onsidered, by his study, Blattodea as order [9].

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