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Insec(tc)ure*:
Are you insecure about your insect cures?

A University of Tennessee Urban IPM Lab Newsletter for the Pest Management Industry

What a Beauty – Meet the Palebordered field cockroach,

Pseudomops septentrionalis Hebard

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This year, I received a most unusual Mother's Day text. It was from a local pest management professional who wished me a happy Mother's Day. Oh, how sweet! But as I read the rest of the text, it was clear he had ulterior motives. He had found an insect and was requesting an identification. Luckily, the images were clear, and the insect was easily identified, so I didn't mind working on the holiday.

Meet *Pseudomops septentrionalis* Hebard (Figure 1), the pale-bordered field cockroach. The dorsal view of the roach is seen through a plastic bag. Note the use of a dime to indicate the size of the cockroach. Someone was paying attention to *Advice for Submitting Digital Images for Urban Pest Identification* in an earlier newsletter, https://epp.tennessee.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/267/2023/11/2021-03DigImV2I3.pdf.

Figure 1. Pseudomops septentrionalis *Hebard (Figure 1), the pale-bordered field cockroach dorsal view (left) and ventral view (right). (Credit: local PMP)*

As I look back through the database of specimens submitted to my UT Urban IPM Lab in Knoxville, Tennessee and my cell phone texts, I find four records of the palebordered field cockroach: 21 June 2012, 12 August 2022, 17 July 2024 and now 11 May 2025. All of these were either from Powell or Knoxville, indicating that this species is established. A peek at the iNaturalist map (Figure 2) shows this roach is now found throughout much of the southern US and beyond. But its distribution wasn't always this widespread. As of 1991 (Atkinson et al. 1991), the palebordered field cockroach was only found in Texas, Louisiana and Oklahoma and suspected of being in Arkansas. A 1999 publication indicated it was first found in Mississippi in the late 1980s (Gaspar et al. 2015) and another report placed it in Alabama in 1996 (Appel et al. 1998).

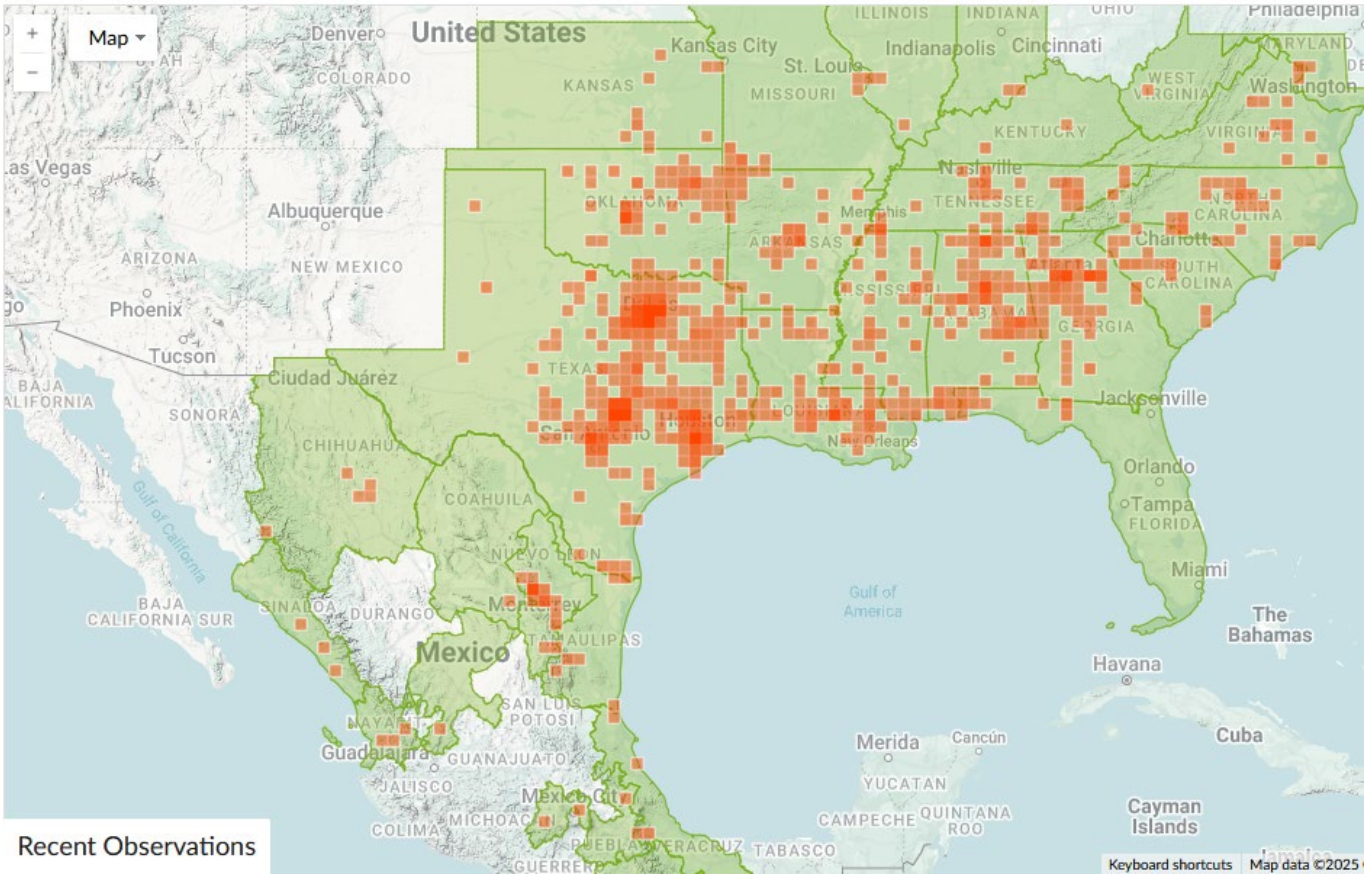


Figure 2. Current distribution of the pale-bordered field cockroach as reported in Inaturalist (Credit: https://www.inaturalist.org/taxa/311163-Pseudomops-septentrionalis).

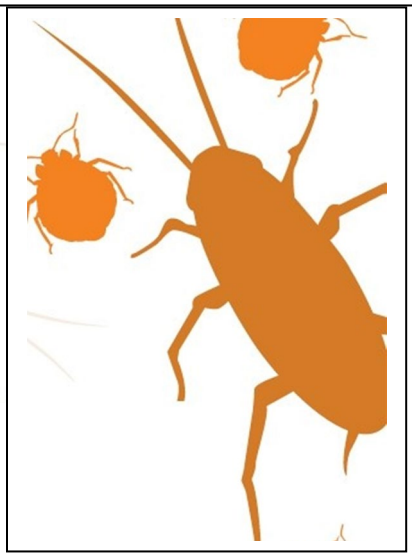
As you can see from Figure 1, the pale bordered field cockroach is relatively small (about 5/8 inch) and quite colorful with an orange pronotal shield bordered by cream. A cream band also borders the dark tegmina (leathery forewings). This cockroach isn't much of a pest because it would have been familiar to you, and it probably spends little time indoors because of its need for moisture. Work out of Art Appel's lab at Auburn University indicates this cockroach is inclined to desiccate in a dry environment, much like tropical cockroaches, and opposite of our common pest, the German cockroach, which can persist and proliferate indoors. These roaches are found outdoors on vegetation, including privet, and in leaf litter and have been observed from about a foot above ground level to up to less than 7 feet. The females can lay up to four 9/32-inch long oothecae (egg cases) on moist substrates such as soil or below stones. In the lab, oothecae must be laid on moistened sponges to survive. In favorable conditions, slightly more than 20 nymphs should emerge from each ootheca after 45 days. Life expectancy is about four months. In Alabama, three or more generations may occur per year. At least these roaches are not attracted to black lights, which should reduce the nuisance factor. If you have seen the palebordered cockroach elsewhere than what is indicated in Figure 2, why not upload your find to iNaturalist (https://www.inaturalist.org/)?

References
Appel, A., M. Tanley, and T. Roulston. 1998. Immigrant Cockroaches: A New Cockroach Established in Alabama. Volume 45 Number 3 Fall 1998
Atkinson, T. H., P. G. Koehler and R. S. Patterson. 1991. Catalog and Atlas of the Cockroaches (Dictyoptera) of North America North of Mexico. ESA Miscellaneous Pub 78: 1-86
Gaspar, J.P.G., C.R. Minteer, T. M Ckay and S. R Aghu. 2015. First Records for *Pseudomops septentrionalis* Hebard (Blattodea: Ectobiidae) and *Acantholomidea porosa* (Germar) (Heteroptera: Scutelleridae), in Arkansas. Journal of the Kansas Entomological Society. 88(1) 124–127

Upcoming Category 7 Training Opportunities

TPCA Summer Conference, July 23-25, The Chattanoogan, Chattanooga - https://www.tpca.info/event-6082531
11th Annual Tennessee Bed Bug, Cockroach and Rodent Management Meeting, Knoxville, TN, August 6th, https://bedbugs.tennessee.edu/11th-annual-tennessee-bed-bug-cockroach-and-rodent-management-meeting/
Ant Identification Workshop, Agriculture and Natural Resources Building, UT, Knoxville, August 14
WDO/GRC Licensing Training, August 19, Murfreesboro, TN, https://psep.tennessee.edu/
Associate Certified Entomologist (ACE) Exam Prep, Sept. 15 – Dec. 15, https://tiny.utk.edu/ACEPrepFall2025

Save the date!



GET Educated

11TH ANNUAL TENNESSEE BED BUG,
COCKROACH & RODENT MANAGEMENT MEETING

WEDNESDAY | AUGUST 6, 2025

Come see a local housing IPM success story!

UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE CONFERENCE CENTER | 600 HENLEY STREET | KNOXVILLE, TENNESSEE 37902
Check-in starts at 7:00 AM | Meeting 8:00 – 4:00 EDT

See https://bedbugs.tennessee.edu/resources/events/ for the finalized schedule, CEU assignment and registration information.

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Disclaimer

This publication contains pesticide recommendations that are subject to change at any time. The recommendations in this publication are provided only as a guide. It is always the pesticide applicator's responsibility, by law, to read and follow all current label directions for the specific pesticide being used. The label always takes precedence over the recommendations found in this publication.

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