



# Smithsonian Center for Materials Research and Education

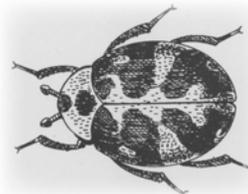
## *Topics in Conservation Lecture*

### **The Sex Life of Cockroaches & Other Cautionary Tales**

Mary Ballard

Senior Textile Conservator, SCMRE

During the past 25 years, the legislated climate for pest control has changed with advances in science, ecological and political concerns, new industrial strategies and formats, and educational developments in teaching urban entomology. Chemical toxicology, the Montreal Protocol, IPM (Integrated Pest management), and alternative treatments have swept out many older compounds and treatments--altering both the biological pressure and the chemical climate on museum collections going forward and even on our own homes. Yet, have the bugs been informed of these new directions? In what ways has the biological pressure really changed and will it be easier or harder to maintain museum collections? Why is the sex life of cockroaches relevant to conservators, conservation scientists, curators, and collection managers? A brief overview of past museum practices, current trends in pest control, and possible hazards to artwork and artifacts and staff will be discussed.



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