



\*South Carolina Aquarium.

## Madagascar Hissing Cockroach (*Gromphadorhina portentosa*)

### **Large Yet Benign**

Madagascar hissing cockroaches are large, wingless reddish brown species of wood cockroaches indigenous to the old world. This specie's ability to "hiss" is created by expelling air through a series of linear pores along the insect's abdomen. Males can be distinguished from females by their pronounced "horns" on their thoraxes or pronotums, as well as thicker antennae than females. Although they are flightless and wingless, they are excellent climbers, and can even climb smooth sided glass and other surfaces. Also as with some other species of wood bearing cockroaches, nymphs and adults may stay in close physical contact and association for extended periods of time as well. Madagascar hissing cockroaches are a large, popular, and well known species that are widely used and kept within the pet trade, and in popular culture in many different movies, films, and attractions/theme parks.

### **Taxonomy**

**Life:** All living, physical, and animate entities

**Domain:** Eukaryota

**Kingdom:** Animalia

**Phylum:** Arthropoda

**Class:** Insecta

**Order:** Blattodea

**Family:** Blaberidae

**Subfamily:** Oxyhaloinae

**Tribe:** Gromphadorhinini

**Genus:** Gromphadorhina

**Species:** *Gromphadorhina spp.\**

*\*Taxonomy subject to change and revision.*

### **Lifespan and Longevity**

If provided the proper care, these Madagascar hissing cockroaches can attain longevity of up to 5 years or slightly more.

### **Distribution and Habitat**

The Madagascar hissing cockroach, as their name implies, is indigenous only to the island of Madagascar off of the southeastern coast of Africa. On Madagascar, they can be found in humid, tropical lowland rainforests and other forests, where they occupy the dry leaf litter, logs, and

other decaying plant matter, vegetation, and ground debris.

### **Experience Level Required**

Novice/Beginner.

### **Size**

Madagascar hissing cockroaches are large roach species, with adults reaching up to 2 to 3 inches in size.

### **Housing and Enclosure**

***Enclosure System: Primarily Terrestrial.*** Housing must be sealed and escape proof, as well as adequately ventilated. A secured, 5 to 10 gallon aquarium, plastic container or kritic keeper, or similar sized tub or container with an appropriate lid is recommended. Several of the acrylic displays and enclosures that are now manufactured for housing arachnids, insects, and other invertebrates can also be used. Orchard or coconut fiber substrate can then be used as acceptable substrates. In addition, furnishings for allowing these insects climbing and hiding opportunities should also be provided, and can include egg crates, cardboard tubes, or commercially available cork hides. For water and hydration, misting at least once every few days is also recommended, or more frequently in areas of drier humidity.

### **Temperature, Lighting, and Humidity**

Madagascar hissing cockroaches do not require any additional UVA/UVB lighting or heating, and should be maintained at around room temperature from 70 to 85 degrees F. For any supplemental heating that may be needed, use a low wattage UVA/UVB and/or incandescent bulb, radiant or ceramic heat emitter, or under tank heating element (or UTH). More specific lighting, heating, and humidity product suggestions and recommendations that can best suit one's needs, as well as those of one's animals can be given as well. Spot clean the enclosure for wastes, feces, or uneaten food at least once per week. Be sure to periodically replace the substrate, clean, and disinfect the enclosure and its furnishings at minimum every 2 to 3 months. Maintain at, or around an optimal humidity level of 60 to 75%.

### **Feeding, Diet, and Nutrition**

***Detritivorous to Omnivorous;*** Madagascar hissing cockroaches are herbivorous to detritivorous in the wild, and will feed on a variety of fruit, vegetable, and other plant matter. They will also consume dead, and decaying plant, soil, and some animal matter, or carrion as well. Some of the foods that can be given every two to three days can include carrots, romaine lettuce and other leafy greens, oranges, apples, squash, and other fruits and vegetables. Additional calcium and vitamin D3 supplementation typically is not required when maintaining Madagascar hissing cockroaches, but it can help with their exoskeleton growth and development. More specific dietary and supplementary product suggestions and recommendations that can best suit one's needs, as well as those of one's animals can be given as well.

### **Handling**

Madagascar hissing cockroaches are a large, slow moving, and docile species of cockroach that can be handled. Care should obviously be taken to not drop or otherwise injure them, however. \*\*Also be sure to practice basic cleanliness and hygiene associated with proper husbandry after touching or handling any animals or animal enclosures to prevent the possibility of contracting salmonellosis or any other zoonotic pathogens\*\*

### **Contact**

Authored by Eric Roscoe. For any additional questions, comments, and/or concerns regarding this animal, group of animals, or this care sheet, please email and contact:

*Disclaimer: Note that the information provided in these, or any care sheets, are not intended to be all-exhaustive, and further research and care should always be sought and provided when it comes to any species one may prospectively be interested in. These care sheets are also not intended to serve as substitutes for professional veterinary medical care and husbandry should any animal require it. Always seek proper and professional veterinary care for any animal should the need arise, and be prepared ahead of time for any and all husbandry costs and expenses that may occur with any animal beyond the initial purchase. Any animal owned is ultimately a matter of personal/individual care and responsibility. We cannot make any claims or guarantees regarding any information in this care sheet therein. This care sheet may be reprinted or redistributed only in its entirety.*

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