



\*Photo Credit: Pinterest, Kylie

## Question Mark and Domino Cockroaches (*Therea* spp.)

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### **Unquestionable Boldness**

This genus consists of small, rounded species of cockroach that are usually boldly colored and marked with black and white markings. In the domino cockroaches, there are usually 6 to 7 white, square to checkered shaped markings on the thorax and abdomen, while the Question Mark cockroaches are identified by their series of ornate markings often resembling inverted “question marks”. The most commonly seen and kept species are the Domino Cockroach (*Therea petiveriana*) and Question Mark Cockroach (*Therea olegrandjeani*). Adults are also winged, but seldom fly and are poor climbers. Domino and question mark roaches are also a tropical genus of roaches that do not become nuisance or pest species if they escape, making them a hardy and popularly kept genus of roach species. This genus are also primarily burrowers as well, especially during larval stages.

### **Taxonomy**

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

**Domain:** Eukaryota

**Kingdom:** Animalia

**Phylum:** Arthropoda

**Class:** Insecta

**Order:** Blattodea

**Family:** Polyphagidae

**Genus:** *Therea*

**Species:** *Therea* spp.\*

\*Taxonomy subject to change and revision.

### **Lifespan and Longevity**

If provided the proper care, domino and question mark cockroaches can attain longevity of up to 5 years or potentially more.

### **Distribution and Habitat**

The question mark and domino cockroaches are a genus of cockroaches indigenous to southern to southeastern Asia, where they occur within India, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, and Thailand. Within this range, these cockroaches can be found in the dry, tropical to sub-tropical forests and woodlands, where they burrow and seek refuge underneath the loose soil, dry leaf litter, and other forest floor debris.

## **Experience Level Required**

Novice/Beginner.

## **Size**

Question mark and domino cockroaches are medium sized to large roaches, reaching up to 1 to 1 ½ inches as adults.

## **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, terrarium or similar sized plastic 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. Three to four inches of non-toxic, chemical free deciduous leaf substrate is also required as a substrate in maintaining these roach species. Other substrate mixtures that can work with these species include coconut fiber 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 or cork bark. For water and hydration, misting at least once every few days is also recommended, or more frequently in areas of drier humidity. Commercially available water crystals and misting 2 to 3 times daily can provide hydration for these species. A small shallow dish of water can also be provided.

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

Domino and question mark cockroaches are tropical roach species do not require any additional lighting or heating, but should be maintained at temperatures from 80 to 90 degrees F, and moderate humidity levels of 75 to 85%. Any supplemental heating or lighting that is needed can be provided using a low wattage incandescent bulb, ceramic or radiant heat emitter, or UTH (under tank heating element). 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 ambient humidity of 40 to 50%, and microclimate humidity of up to around 75 to 85%.

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

***Detritivorous to Omnivorous;*** Domino and Question Mark cockroaches are herbivorous to detritivorous, and will feed on a variety of fruit, vegetable, and other plant matter. Some of the foods that can be given every two to three days can include greens, carrots, romaine lettuce and other leafy greens, oranges, apples, squash, and other fruits and vegetables. Further calcium and vitamin D3 supplementation is not typically required, but can help with 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**

Domino and question mark cockroaches can be handled. They are docile yet fast moving species of cockroach, and should obviously be taken to not drop or otherwise injure them. They can also jump short distances as well. Overall, the *Therea* genus of cockroaches are hardy and easily maintained roach species to keep in captivity as pets or as feeders.

**\*\*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:

[Eric.S.Roscoe@gmail.com](mailto:Eric.S.Roscoe@gmail.com)

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