

# Madagascar Giant Hissing Cockroach

**Genus:** *Gromphadorhina*

**Family:** *Blaberidae*

**Order:** Dictyoptera

**Class:** Insecta

**Phylum:** Arthropoda

**Kingdom:** Animalia

## Conditions for Customer Ownership

We are a USDA compliant facility and hold all necessary permits to transport our organisms. Each state is assisted by the USDA to determine which organisms can be transported across state lines. Some organisms may require end-user permits. Please contact your local regulatory authorities with questions or concerns. To access permit conditions, [click here](#).



## Never purchase living specimens without having a disposition strategy in place.

Live specimens should not be released into the wild! Please dispose of any unwanted organisms using the guidelines below.

## Primary Hazard Considerations

Always wash your hands thoroughly after you handle your cockroaches, its food, or anything it has touched. Hissing cockroaches have sharp spurs on their legs that can snag on rough skin, so some people prefer to handle them while wearing gloves.

## Availability

Hissing cockroaches are available year round, since they are bred in the lab. Cockroaches will arrive in a paper container with moist paper towel, and can survive in the shipping container for 3–5 days at room temperature. Hissing cockroaches are large roaches and can reach 2–3" in length.

## Captive Care

### Habitat:

- Any escape-proof container with holes for oxygen exchange. We use plastic or glass terrariums with ventilated tops. Line the container with organic soil (470025-198) or non-cedar wood chips. Cockroaches prefer the dark which can be accomplished by providing hiding places. These can be as simple as empty paper towel/toilet paper tubes or egg crates. Cockroaches don't mind being crowded, and with many hiding places you can easily house 10–20 cockroaches per square foot of space.
- Ideal temperature is about room temperature with 35%–45% (or moderate) humidity.

### Care:

- **Food:** Cockroaches are scavengers and will eat almost anything. We provide them with fresh vegetables and dry dog food.
- **Water:** Provide water for your cockroaches with a wet sponge or cotton ball (do not allow to dry). We use a wick system which is a loosely covered jar with water in the bottom and a cotton wick to provide a moist surface the roaches can drink from.
- **Care:** Habitat does not need to be cleaned often but if it develops mold or fungus, remove the growths immediately. If you should see any mites on your cockroach these should be removed immediately. These mites are parasitic to the roach (and harmless to humans). To remove the mites, briefly hold your cockroach under running water, giving it a "bath," and return it to a cleaned habitat with fresh substrate.

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## Information

- **Method of Reproduction:** Sexual. Female retains fertilized eggs internally and gives live birth.
- **Determining sex:** *Male:* Males have pronotal humps (horn-like protrusions) located on thorax, with bushy antennae that point upward and a short stocky abdomen. *Females:* Females have small or no bumps on thorax, with short thin antennae that point downward and a long slender abdomen.

## Life Cycle

- **Egg:** contained in a case called an ootheca which is retained in the body of the mother for about three months.
- **Nymph:** molts approx. six times in 5–10 months before becoming sexually mature (an adult).
- **Adult:** (This is the form you receive) The adult hissing cockroach has a lifespan of about 1–3 years and can reach 4–7 cm long.

## Wild Habitat

Hissing cockroaches are originally from Madagascar, an island off the coast of Africa with a tropical/subtropical environment. In the wild, they forage on the forest floor eating mostly fallen fruits and decaying wood. Birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians, and even other insects are predators that will eat the giant cockroach.

## Special Notes

During aggressive encounters, courtships, and disturbances, the cockroach will produce its signature hiss. The hiss does not come from the cockroach's mouth. This hissing sound is actually created by expelling air from its abdominal spiracles or breathing pores.

## Disposition

- We do not recommend releasing any laboratory animal into the wild, and especially not insects that are considered to be pests or not native to the environment.
- Adoption is the preferred disposition for any living animal.
- If the insects must be euthanized at the end of study, follow one of these procedures:
  - Put them into a container or bag and freeze for 48 hours.
  - Place the organism in 70% isopropyl alcohol for 24 hours.
  - Autoclave the organism @ 121°C for 15 minutes.
- A deceased specimen should be disposed of as soon as possible. Consult your school's recommended procedures for disposal. In general, dead insects should be handled as little as possible or with gloves, wrapped in an opaque plastic bag that is sealed (tied tightly) before being placed in a general garbage container away from students.