

## MADAGASCAR HISSING COCKROACH

updated March 2017



<b>Range</b>	Madagascar
<b>Habitat</b>	Warm, moist forest (at ground level)
<b>Diet (wild)</b>	Primarily plant parts such as fallen fruit and other plant debris
<b>Diet (captivity)</b>	Produce, dog food
<b>Description</b>	Length: 4 inches. Large and wingless. Mostly shiny brown with a black head, prothorax, and legs; males have thick horns located just behind their heads; females have only small “bumps,” giving them a much rounder look. Antennae of males are hairy; females’ are relatively smooth.
<b>Lifespan</b>	Wild: 1 year. Captivity: 2–5 years
<b>Reproduction</b>	Ovoviviparous, the female incubates the eggs in a special brood pouch for 60 days; her body provides no nourishment, just a safe environment for the eggs. One female can produce 30–60 nymphs (immature stage resembling miniature adults). Nymphs consume the brood pouch lining almost immediately after hatching. After undergoing six molts, nymphs reach maturity in 5–7 months.
<b>Behavior</b>	Cockroaches in general are reclusive and nocturnal, usually spending their time hiding in crevices. The hissing cockroach, however, becomes aggressive when disturbed. They are also unusual in their ability to produce sound by hissing. Hissing is produced by expelling air through a pair of modified abdominal spiracles (breathing pores) rather than by rubbing body parts (such as crickets) or by vibrating a membrane (such as cicadas). Hissing cockroaches produce disturbance hisses when disturbed or handled; males will hiss during hierarchy disputes and courtship interactions. Aggressive behavior involves males charging each other with their horns or pushing each other with their abdomens. Size and hiss play important roles in these encounters, as winners are usually larger and hiss more. While hissing cockroaches are primarily nocturnal, male fighting can be seen during the day. These cockroaches live in large colonies and are eaten by birds and other predators.
<b>Our animals</b>	Varies
<b>Cool stuff</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tropical cockroaches are good fliers and will fly toward a light source. Hissing cockroaches, however, do not possess wings.</li> <li>• Males can discriminate between hisses of familiar males and strangers.</li> <li>• Symbiotic bacteria in their gut allow them to digest a wide variety of foods, including wood.</li> <li>• Cockroaches can run fast and even jump a little.</li> <li>• All but five or six of the 3,500 species of cockroaches have been domesticated.</li> <li>• Cockroaches represent an ancient life form, basically unchanged, since the Carboniferous Period (270–350 million years ago). The name comes from the Spanish <i>cucaracha</i>.</li> </ul>

**Phylum**  
Arthropoda

**Class**  
Insecta

**Order**  
Blattodea

**Family**  
Blaberidae

**Genus**  
Gromphadorhina

**species**  
*G. portentosa*