

# Madagascar Hissing Cockroach

*Gromphadorhina portentosa*



## CARE SHEET

Developed with and approved by a Qualified Veterinarian

This species is a large wingless cockroach that makes a great pet for the beginning insect keeper. The name refers to the unusual hissing sounds they make.



### Is a hissing cockroach the right companion animal for you?

Yes	No
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Check "Yes" or "No" after reading the following statements:

1. I have an appropriate location and space for this cockroach.
2. I can feed and clean up after a cockroach daily.
3. I want a pet that doesn't need to be cuddled or touched.
4. I can commit to providing proper care for a cockroach.
5. A mature person will provide responsible and primary care for this companion animal.

If you answered "Yes" to these statements, a Madagascar hissing cockroach may be the right choice for you! Continue reading about how to care for a Madagascar hissing cockroach and consult with a PETCO associate to learn more. PETCO is committed to responsible companion animal care.

**Average Size** Up to 3 inches long **Life Span** 1 to 3 years with proper care

**Diet** Romaine lettuce, red leaf lettuce, apples, carrots, and occasional overripe fruits  
Dry dog food, commercial rodent blocks

**Feeding** Feed every day

**Housing** Size – Appropriate size habitat, wider than it is tall, with a secure lid

Substrate – Mulch-type commercial material; unbleached paper towels, soil, dampened sphagnum moss, and bark

Habitat – Provide hiding areas using non-toxic plants, branches, logs or cork bark; maintain high humidity by misting daily

Temperature – Cockroaches like to be warm, so keep the temperature from 75° F. to 85° F.; place heating strips or pads under the habitat

Lighting – Cockroaches are nocturnal and have no special lighting needs; do not expose them to direct sunlight for long periods; to view cockroaches at night, use a black or infrared light

Water – Use a commercial cricket waterer or a water bowl; use chlorine-free water and place stones in the bowl to prevent cockroaches from drowning; commercial water drink (gel) is a good alternative water source.

Do not house different species together

### Recommended Supplies

- |                                                            |                                                         |
|------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Appropriate size habitat with lid | <input type="checkbox"/> Food dishes                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Substrate                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Water dish                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mist bottle                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Branches and logs for hiding   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Infrared or black light           | <input type="checkbox"/> Thermometer and humidity gauge |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Non-toxic plants                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Heat source                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Book about cockroaches            |                                                         |

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**Normal Behavior and Interaction** Male cockroaches have large horns behind their heads while females have very small horns  
Cockroaches are nocturnal  
Although wingless, they have specially padded feet that enable them to climb any surface; a heavy layer of petroleum jelly around the top edge of the tank will prevent escape  
Handle cockroaches very gently; although they do not bite, they have sharp spines on their legs  
Juvenile cockroaches (called nymphs) must molt (shed their skins) several times before reaching adulthood; once grown they do not molt again

**Habitat Maintenance** Change water every day  
Mist habitat several times daily to maintain high humidity  
Replace substrate every two weeks

**Grooming and Hygiene** Cockroaches have a waxy coating; always wash your hands after touching your cockroaches, and avoid getting the coating into cuts and scratches

**Signs of a Healthy Animal**

- Eats regularly
- Active and alert
- Body is rounded and full
- Healthy exoskeleton

Common Health Issues	Health Issue (alpha)	Symptoms or Causes	Suggested Action
	Dehydration	Lethargic, shriveled appearance.	Spray mist habitat more frequently.
	Falls, injuries	Bleeding.	Coat wound with fingernail hardener.

**Red Flags**

- Swollen limbs
- Weight loss
- Dull exoskeleton
- Lethargic
- Abnormal feces
- Bumps, sores, or abrasions
- Discharge in mouth or eyes

**If you notice any of these signs, please contact your exotic animal veterinarian.**

**Sources** *The Compleat Cockroach* by Walter Dean Myers

**Note:** The information on this Care Sheet is not a substitute for veterinary care. If you need additional information, please refer to the above sources or contact your veterinarian as appropriate.