

Madagascar Hissing Cockroach (*Gromphadorhina portentosa*)

Habitat and Distribution: Forest floors on the island of Madagascar off of the African coast.

Size: Up to 3 inches

Wild Diet: Decomposers: rotting plants, fallen fruit, decaying animals

Predators: Small mammals, birds, snakes, lizards, frogs and larger insects.

Life Span: 5 years (captive life span)

Reproduction: Females produce and carry their egg case internally. After 60-70 days, the eggs hatch and 15-40 nymphs are born live. They are about the size of a watermelon seed. The parents and nymphs remain together for about six months. The nymphs will molt six times before they become sexually mature. Adult hissing cockroaches do not molt.

Behavior: Hissing cockroaches are nocturnal. They are very good climbers and can even scale smooth vertical glass. These cockroaches have been known to live in large colonies. They are able to make a loud hissing sound by forcing air through breathing pores called spiracles on their abdomen. There are two types of hisses: a disturbance hiss and a fighting hiss. All of the roaches can make the disturbance hiss once they have completed their fourth molt. The males use the fighting hiss when they are challenged by other males. The males establish territories which they defend, but the females do not fight and can cross between the territories of several males.

Conservation Connection: Secure

Interesting Facts: These roaches are wingless, unlike most other cockroaches. Males have thicker, hairier antennae than the females, and horn-like projections on the thorax that are used during combat with other males. Cockroaches are an important part of the forest ecosystem. They recycle dead and decaying plant and animal matter into nutrients that can be used by the plant-life in the forest.



www.pdza.org

