



Madagascar Hissing Cockroach

Gromphadorhina portentosa



We live in the discovery center where you can view us in our habitat. However, some of us are ambassador animals and can be seen on many educational programs. We are **sedentary** and like to lounge around our enclosure. We are quiet and calm. However we can be **exploratory** and **inquisitive**, especially at night.

COCKROACHES AT A GLANCE



- Small black **spiracles** line the edges of the abdomen.
- I can make a **hissing sound** by pushing air through these spiracles.



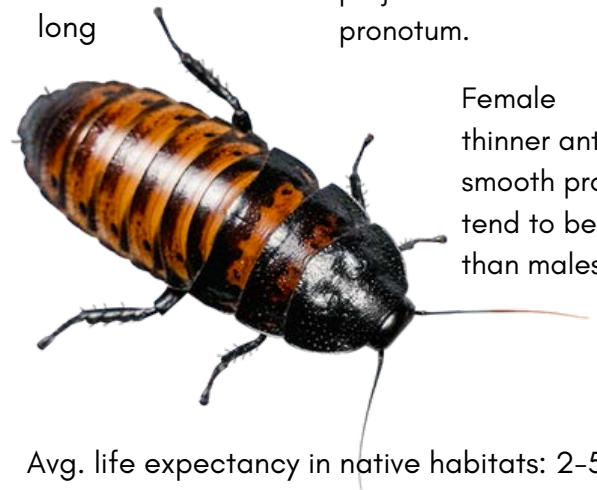
- Unlike other cockroaches, they lack any wings.
- They rely on their legs to be **agile climbers** and can climb most surfaces!



- They have a specialized mouth for eating organic matter.
- In the wild, they will scavenge for decaying plant and animal matter.
- At the zoo, they eat a variety of fruits and vegetables, like sweet potatoes, celery, and apples.

Adult:
2-4 inches
long

Male:
thicker antennae and
two horn-like
projections on
pronotum.



Female
thinner antennae,
smooth pronotum,
tend to be larger
than males.

Avg. life expectancy in native habitats: 2-5 years
Avg. life expectancy in human care: 2-5 years

WHERE ARE NATIVE HISSING COCKROACHES HABITATS LOCATED?



They are found only on the island of Madagascar off the coast of Africa. They occupy the forest floor of the tropical lowland rainforests.

Hissing Cockroach Behaviors

DOMINANCE

Males will establish territories and defend them from other adult males.

Don't be surprised if we push each other and hiss for our space.



HISSING

I communicate by pushing air through spiracles on my body. We have different hisses for defense, to signal danger, and courtship and mating

If we make noise, we could just be communicating, or indicating we are uncomfortable.



MOLTING

We have a special way of growing. When we reach a certain size or life cycle, we shed our exoskeleton. Without it, we cannot grow.

If we are on our back and still, we might be in the process of shedding our exoskeleton.

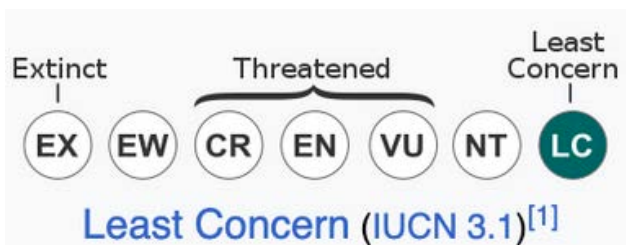


- Hissing cockroaches are communal and live in large family groups called a **colony** with a presiding dominant male.
- The dominant male will display themselves by standing on their "toes" called **stiling**
- They shelter during the day under rocks, logs, or any space. This cockroach is most active at night when foraging.

Hissing Cockroach Conservation

Madagascar Hissing Cockroaches act as **detritivores**, breaking down decaying plant and animal matter, serving as nature's trash collectors, and reintroducing nutrients into the soil through their droppings.

They are currently listed as **least concern**; however, they are misunderstood and many think they are "gross." However, they play an important part in the health of an ecosystem.



How can we help?

It is crucial to safeguard native insects as they play a vital role in the ecosystem. They act as decomposers by aiding in waste breakdown, and by facilitating plant pollination. The use of pesticides and herbicides to combat insect pests and weeds poses a significant risk to unintended targets, including beneficial insects.