

## Biofacts: Madagascar Hissing Cockroach

Scientific Name: *Gromphadorhina portentosa*



### Habitat:

The Madagascar Hissing Cockroach is endemic to Madagascar. It lives primarily on the forest floor of tropical, lowland forests.

### Lifespan:

Most are found to live up to 2 years, while other in captivity have lived up to 5 years.

### Behavior:

These roaches are detritivores, or feed primarily on dead, decaying organic matter. Fallen fruit is readily available, but they also feed on dead vegetation, or smaller insect and animal carcasses. Hissing cockroaches are well known for producing sounds. The roaches produce a “hissing” noise through holes (spiracles) in their abdomen. They can make five, hiss-like calls: One for alarm, two for mating, and one specifically for males in combat for territory. They are the only insect known to make sound this way.

Male hissing cockroaches will show off by “stilting”, or standing on their toes. Dominant males will do this most, and the roach that hisses the loudest and is the largest typically wins. Females do not defend territories.

### Fun Facts!

- Male hissing cockroaches possess large bumps, or tubercles just behind their head. These bumps can be used as battering rams, or for display for mating.
- Madagascar Hissing Cockroaches are one of the largest roaches in the world. Some can reach a length of over 3 inches long, not including their antennae.
- Female Hissing Cockroaches can have up to 40 nymphs, or roach babies at one time.
- Hissing cockroaches are an essential food source for other endemic Madagascar predators. Insects have up to 3 times more protein in them than chicken or beef, based on relation to body size.

**Want to learn more? Visit these websites to learn more about Madagascar Hissing Cockroaches!**

**Animal Diversity Web:** [https://animaldiversity.org/accounts/Gromphadorhina\\_portentosa/](https://animaldiversity.org/accounts/Gromphadorhina_portentosa/)

**National Geographic:** <https://kids.nationalgeographic.com/animals/invertebrates/insects/hissing-cockroach/>

**VIDEO: PBS Science Minutes:** <https://www.pbs.org/video/science-minutes-madagascar-hissing-cockroach-sjr34r/>