

# Husbandry Data Sheet

**Common Name:** Giant South American Cockroach **Latin Name:** *Blaberus giganteus*

**Family:** Blaberidae

**Order:** Dictyoptera

**Class:** Insecta

**Phylum:** Arthropoda

**Natural History:** Range: Central and South America, and the West Indies

**Diet:** In the wild, this roach is found primarily in bat caves and roosts, and feeds off of bat guano, dead bats, and any fruit that the bats might drop. Consequently, they require a fairly high protein captive diet of dry dog food and occasional soft fruit. Other accepted diets include fish flakes, cat food, trout or turtle chow, or (limited) rabbit pellets.

**Care:** Since this is a relatively long lived roach (nymphs undergo 9 –11 molts over a 257 –277 day period, adult males have been reported to live 1 – 6 months after maturity, adult females can, rarely, live over a year after maturity) it can be several months before a new colony begins to grow. However, once started, the colony will rapidly expand. This is one of the largest roaches (in length; the heaviest is most likely the Australian burrowing roach) and a live - bearer – no eggs are laid. Native Costa Ricans have been known to call this roach ‘the Cockroach of the Divine Face’, a reference to the dark brown .

**Permits Required:** Yes

**Life Stage:** Adult

**Ease of Care:** Easy

## Housing:

**Temp:** Captive temperature 75 -80F  
much humidity can lead to higher mortality rates.

**Humidity:** Misting is not required. Too

**Substrate:** Cypress mulch or other wood mulch

**# of Animals per Exhibit:** 400 -500

**Choose One:** Colony

**Compatible Species:** N/A

**Enclosure Description:** We use a large acrylic odd-shaped exhibit. Off exhibit housing is 50 gallon long tank

**Lighting/Photoperiod:** 12/12

**Furniture/Props:** Climbing materials such as cork bark, provide the roaches with a vertical resting spot that approximates a cave wall or rocky crevice.

**Escape Concerns:** This species can not climb glass.

**Other Concerns/Precautions:**

## Husbandry

**Diet/Frequency of Feeding:** Dry dog food and occasional soft fruit. See note above under Natural History for additional information and diet suggestions. Food should always be present.

**Water Source/Frequency:** Water should always be present in a shallow water dish or a dish with cotton balls, paper towels, pebbles, etc. to prevent drowning.

**Care:** Daily

**Enrichment:** None

**Medical/Health Concerns:** Overcrowding can lead to cannibalism. Mites can be controlled by adding charcoal to the substrate.

**Treatment:** See above.

**Keeper Safety:**

**Other Concerns/Precautions:**

## Education

**Do you handle species directly with the guests? :** Yes

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**If Yes or No how do you use the species with the guest:**They are handleable but..can be fast and adults are capable of gliding some distance if they "jump". Sharp tibial spurs can scratch. Some people may display allergies.

**Conservation/Population Status:**

**Message:**like to talk about animal diversity and "good" roaches. They can also be an excellent example of cave dwelling fauna, decomposers, or "ancient" species.

**Personal Comments:**Because of their large size and ease of care this species provides a lot of bang for the buck. I have found them very popular with the public; they even ask for them if they are removed from exhibit!

**Submitted by (name and email):**Tanya K. Minott

**Date:**4-Feb-05 **Name of Institution:**Philadelphia Zoo