



# LWAS Animal Care Sheets

## Madagascar Hissing Cockroach



**Roaches are the ultimate easy pet! They are hardy, docile and will eat just about anything.**

### Quick Facts

**Average size:** 2-3 inches    **Diet:** dog kibble, veggies, fruit    **Handling:** Beginner

**Average Lifespan:** 2-5 years    **Enclosure:** Tank or bin

### Housing

**Size:** MHCs don't need a ton of space, as long as the container is at least a few times the length and width of the roach, they'll be fine, but the more roaches you have, the more space they'll need. You can use a glass terrarium or plastic bin with holes or screen for ventilation. Vaseline can be used as a forcefield to stop babies from crawling up the wall

**Population:** many males and females can be housed together in a colony, but they will reproduce! You can keep the population down by keeping them in a cool room, or only keeping males. Babies can also be fed to insectivores.

**Substrate:** can use most substrates, repti-bark is our favorite aesthetic choice, but newspaper or paper towel are also fine. We don't use high-humidity or fine substrates because they can allow fruit flies to live in the cage.

**Furniture:** provide climbing materials so they aren't sitting on top of each other. Disposable options include milk cartons, drink holders, cardboard boxes and tubes. Any plastic or ceramic climbing toys/hides are also fine. You can even get creative with things like dollhouse furniture, plastic dinosaurs, and other silly things that most pets can't have.

**Temperature/Humidity:** MHCs are from Madagascar so they enjoy temperatures of up to 95 degrees F and humidity. However, this species is hearty so can be kept at room temperature and lower humidity to prevent over-population and fruit flies.

### Handling

MHCs are used as program animals in lots of museums, nature centers and schools for a reason, they are easy to handle! Kids still need an adult at first to make sure they don't get spooked and drop the roach, but luckily they do have a hard shell and can handle a little tumble if it does happen.

Lift up roaches from underneath by putting your hand in front of them and scooting them with the other hand, encouraging them to walk onto your hand. They have Velcro feet so encouraging them to walk is better than plucking them straight up.

### Diet

In the wild, roaches eat any dead material, plant or animal! In captivity, they thrive on a diet of cheap dog kibble and/or fish food, and fresh scraps of fruit/veggies. They will happily take all your apple cores and squash skins and clean your mango pits!

A dish of water can drown bugs- use small rocks in the water dish, or provide water with wet cotton balls, paper towel, or with cricket water gel.