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GIANT BURROWING COCKROACH (*Macropanesthia rhinoceros*)

Diet:

This insect eats dead, dried leaves of various plant species and other associated matter such as bark, dried grass and twigs. (IMPORTANT: leaves must be collected from an environment that you know to be free of poison sprays etc.)

In captivity they don't mind the occasional small amount of fruit such as apple or banana skin, or even potato peelings. This material needs to be removed when no longer fresh.

For an available water source, a damp tissue-ball or some sphagnum moss needs to be provided.

Housing:

A fish tank makes ideal housing.

The humidity needs to be kept at a reasonable level with only a small amount of ventilation needed. A standard cover glass lid will be suitable as these cockroaches can not climb vertical surfaces. A layer of sandy soil is ideal for their tank.

DO NOT let the tank dry out, keep the sand in one end moist and keep the other end a bit drier but not completely dry!

Care:

This insect requires little maintenance. Add new leaf litter when the existing leaves are too old or too few.

Make sure the tissue ball or sphagnum moss remains moist at all times, replacing with fresh material when necessary.

IMPORTANT! If the soil is completely dry, it is advisable to add moisture by light misting. Even though these insects are dry country dwellers they do require a reasonable humidity level. Be careful not to make the enclosure too wet. Every couple of months, change the sandy soil.

Some interesting facts:

- These are the largest cockroaches on earth.
- They construct and live in underground burrows up to 1 metre in depth. Individuals can weigh over 30 grams.
- Adults and young can stay together for up to 9 months.
- The young are born alive with up to as many as 30 in a brood not unheard of, but they breed only once a year. In captivity they have been recorded to live up to 7 years.
- Distribution: Queensland (from Cooktown to Rockhampton)