

ROACH CARE SHEET

Death's Head Roach *Blaberus craniifer*

General Information

Distribution: Central America, Mexico & Florida

Adult Size: Adults range from 1.5" – 2.2".

Babies: Babies are around 3/16".

Sexing: Males are very narrow in the rear abdomen and smaller. Females are typically much larger than males with a wider body and wing base.

Active Period: Nocturnal, most roaches will scamper away when they see light. I recommend a dark container kept in a dark environment.

Life Span: Typically this species will live from 12-24 months after reaching adulthood, but males will die earlier than females.

Speed: *Blaberus craniifer* are a fast speed roach. Not easy to hold in your hand, but fun to watch.

Housing

Cage: My general care sheet talks about different types of cages. I prefer a dark Rubbermaid container with a vented lid.

Substrate: I prefer to use sphagnum moss, coconut fiber a.k.a. bed-a-beast, or soil (1/2" or so) in my discoid containers. This does add a little time to the cleanings, but its easier then other substrates I've tried. Some people like to use shredding aspen, bran, newspaper, or other substrates, but it can be difficult to get all the nymphs out.

Hiding: Roaches need places to hide, room to breed, and space to molt. Most people use egg crates, which work well and can be changed out as needed. Some build little roach motels with corkboard that last longer, but cost more. For a more natural setting you can use dry hardwood leaves, bark, and other pieces of wood.

Heat: These roaches can be kept between 78F-95F. For faster growth and breeding the higher temps work better, but always offer a cool and hot side for temperature variance.

Humidity: Mild humidity is fine with this species. A staple supply of water (see our water crystals under the product section) and fruits/veggies provides enough moisture for *craniifer*. If

you see bad molts or wrinkled wings then bump up the humidity by spraying or adding water to the substrate.

Cleaning: All non-climbers are very easy to clean. My standard method is to take the eggs crates and knock all the roaches off into an empty container. Then I will separate out the adults back into the breeding bin with new egg crates and put the nymphs in their own bin. I do this so I don't have to disturb the breeding adult's everyday when I need to get feeder nymphs. Usually I will have to dump all the frass (poop) and the substrate into a bowl and pick out the remaining baby nymphs with a spoon or by hand. This whole process takes me about 30 minutes in cages with substrate. Usually you can go 1-6 month between cleanings based on the size of your colony.

Food & Water

Food: Fruits & veggies should be given 2-3 times per week. A staple dry food like roach buffet (under are products section) should also be offered 2-3 times per week. Typically I alternate my food every day between dry and wet. I also only give small portions so all is eaten to prevent mold. You will quickly learn how much your roaches will eat.

Water: Because these roaches cannot climb they will drown in a water dish. Using sponges is also a bad ideal because they can grow bacteria. I think the best method for moisture is water crystals (look under our product section) with the occasional misting.

Breeding

Age: B. craniifer usually takes 3-5 month to mature into adults. Most roaches will go through seven molts. When you see a white roach it is not "albino", but a freshly molted one that will regain its color usually within 24 hours. Sometime you will find there dried exoskeleton, which most people think is a dead dried up roach, but it's just the leftovers from the molt.

Breeding: Not much to tell here. Just keep them warm, fed, dark most of the time, and they are going to breed. Females will start to get larger and sometimes you can even see their segments stretching out. B. craniifer females are live bearers. Try to not disturb them if you see females with their egg sack protruded. Usually this process only takes 30 minutes or so.

Other Notes

Production: Although non-climbers aren't as prolific like lobsters they can provide a stable food source. I always recommend starting with 50-100 and building from there. I started out producing hundreds, then a thousand or so, and now I'll be producing several thousands each month.

Meat-to-shell: Roaches have much higher meat to shell ratio than other feeders. This means it takes less of them to fill up your pets, and they're getting more out of bugs.

Wings: Both male and female craniifer are winged, but they do not fly. Occasionally a male will jump and try to fly. This is very rare, but sometime they can jump 12-24 inches. A simple vented lid on their container will prevent one from ever getting out.

Climbing: This species cannot climb smooth surfaces, which makes them very easy to contain. It is so easy to go in and grab a roach compared to crickets, which jump out of everything and end up everywhere.

Smell: Blaberus craniifer have little smell.

Advantages of roaches over crickets and mealworms!!!

1. No smelly containers.
2. Very easy to care for and clean.
3. Easy to breed and use as feeders.
4. Don't make any noise.
5. Don't jump.
6. Higher meat to shell ratio.
7. You know the source of your feeders. I've kept them at the highest quality, and so are you. You are not getting the crickets that survived and are poorly fed and malnutrition.
8. MOST IMPORTANT – They are a good natural feeder for your pet, and they will go crazy for them.

Email me if you have any questions.
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