



Blaptica Dubia Roach Care & Info Sheet- Brief

Blaptica dubia roaches are a live bearing roach species native to parts of Central and South America. Dubia roaches range in size from 1/8" nymphs to 2" adults, and are edible in all stages of their lifecycle. They will give birth to around 30-40 small nymphs every month. Female dubia roaches can live up to 2 years, with the Males living about 1-1/2 years. Because dubia roaches cannot climb slick surfaces feeding your bearded dragon in a 1½"-2" glass/ceramic dish with straight, smooth sides will make it difficult for the roaches to escape and you will know exactly how many your dragon has eaten. If one does escape, your dragon will hunt them down because they really like eating them. Dubia roaches are more nutritious than many other insects commonly used for feeding reptiles.

Breeding and taking care of dubia roaches is easy, inexpensive, and requires less time and effort than you might think. All that is required is a ventilated container, a second container to hold the roaches when sorting or cleaning, a heat source, food, water, and something for them to hide under. Your colony should include roaches of all sizes in order to create a complete ecosystem. Unlike crickets or super worms, roach enclosures do not smell and can be kept clean with very little maintenance. Dubia roaches prefer to be left alone and will breed better if you don't mess with them. They should be checked daily to make sure they have food & water, and to remove any leftover fresh food to prevent mold and bacteria growth. The enclosure only needs to be cleaned 2-3 times per year, and should not be cleaned until there is more than 2"-3" of frass (roach droppings & shed exoskeletons) in the bottom of the enclosure. It is important not to remove all of the frass because it provides a medium for the roaches to burrow into and also provides a food source for the nymphs.

Once your colony is established, you should remove your feeder stock for 1-2 months to avoid repeatedly disturbing your breeding colony. This would also be a good time to clean the enclosure if it is necessary. The feeders should be kept in a separate ventilated container and be provided food & water, but will not require a heat source as long as the temperature is above 65F° so they can be kept in a dark closet or under the sink. It is also a good idea to remove any extra males at this time and use them as feeders. There should be 1 adult male to every 3-4 females. Any extra adult males left in your colony will only eat the food and provide more competition for the available resources for the females. We tend to err on the side of caution keeping the ratio of 1 male to 3 females and believe it is worth a little extra food & water to insure maximum breeding.

Dubia roaches are sexually dimorphic which means that the males & females look different the adult males have full wings the length of their bodies, while the adult females have small stubs. The larger nymphs can also be sexed. Look at the last segment on the bottom of their abdomen. On males the last segment is small and narrow. On females the last segment is large and is the full width of the abdomen. Also the females are also generally wider than the males but not as long.

Since dubia roaches can't climb or fly they can be kept in just about any container that has smooth perpendicular sides. Whatever you use for an enclosure it should be opaque since roaches do not like light and breed better in the dark. If you use an aquarium, you can tape paper on the outside to block the light. If you chose to use clear totes you will have to paint or cover the sides, so it is usually easier to buy the opaque totes. All that you have to do is to cut out a section of the lid and hot glue aluminum or steel screening over the hole. This provides the ventilation, keeps other insects out, and allows you to place a light fixture over the hole as a heat source. For heat you can use a black or red light bulb, or you can paint a regular light bulb black with high temp barbecue paint. We use opaque totes and put a strip of smooth packing tape around the upper edge. We also have a second enclosure set up so we can just move the roaches from one enclosure to the other when we are cleaning & sorting them. This allows us to clean the initial enclosures at our leisure and not have to clean it immediately so we can put them back into it.

The most efficient way to house dubia roaches is without any substrate. Instead use cardboard egg crates, paper towel rolls or crumpled up newspaper. Dubia roaches like to burrow, especially the nymphs, and if you do not have any substrate you will frequently find them under the feeding dishes. Over time the frass will build up and provide something for the roaches to burrow in. Dubia roaches are tropical insects and they breed best if the warm side of the enclosure is kept at 100F° - 110F°. The cool end should be kept above 75F° - 85F°. There should also be a temperature gradient for the roaches to cool down when they want. The egg crates should be placed towards the hot side of the enclosure and the food & "water should be placed at the cool end. A thermostat is not necessary because you can tell from their behavior if the temp is correct. If they are all clustered away from the heat source then the enclosure is probably too hot, and if your adults are not breeding then it is probably too cold. There are many ways to heat the enclosures. Some of the most common are locating the enclosure in a hot dark location like near the furnace, dryer, or hot water heater. They can also be heated by using a reptile heat mat, human heating pad, heat tape, or incandescent light bulbs.

Food; Food & water should be provided daily in low dishes that they can climb in & out of. Small dishes or lids from plastic containers work very well. We use plastic coffee can lids because they are deep enough to keep the food &



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water in place, but not too deep for the roaches. The food & water dishes should be cleaned routinely, with 10% bleach or dish soap and water. They should be well rinsed and allowed to dry thoroughly. What do roaches eat? Well, roaches are scavengers so they will eat pretty much anything they find available, just remember that what goes into the roach eventually goes into your reptile. This is especially important for dubia roaches who have a long intestinal tract and food can take up to 72 hours to digest which makes gut loading much more effective. They should be provided a dry food source that can be left in the enclosure some of the options include roach chow, dog or cat food, baby food, fish food, egg laying chicken feed, rabbit pellets, cereal, bread, etc. Some roach breeders recommend a high protein dry food, but others suggest a low protein dry food may be better and closer to their natural diet in the wild. To supplement the dry food they should be provided fresh foods 2-3 times per week. The fresh foods provide an additional source of water and also a lot of important vitamins & minerals. They can be given fresh foods every day but it is not necessary and will just create more work since it has to be removed as daily and soon as it starts to mold. Mold will kill an entire colony of roaches very fast, so any fresh food that is not eaten should be removed and discarded every day. The "fresh" food can include fruits, vegetables, leftover dragon greens, any leftovers you have from preparing or eating meals, oranges, potatoes, grapes, carrots, bananas, apples, lettuce, and almost anything we can eat. All fruits & vegetables should be washed to remove any pesticides or preservatives which may be toxic to the roaches or to your reptile. Always remember that what you feed your roaches will be fed to your reptile so you will want to be careful with which fresh foods, and what quantities you are feeding the roaches. Don't feed them any rotten foods, spoiled foods, uncooked meat, or dairy products.

While they will obtain a significant amount of moisture from the "fresh food" portion of their diet, a clean water source is as important as a good food source and there are many options. Dubia roaches are somewhat tolerant to low humidity, but they prefer a higher humidity and will breed much better with adequate moisture & humidity. If juvenile & adult roaches are dying during incomplete molts, then the humidity is too low. Water can be provided with a shallow dish of water with a sponge in it, with commercial insect waterers, or with water crystals. If you use a dish of water and a piece of sponge, make sure the sponge doesn't touch the cardboard, as it will soak up all the moisture and promote mold & bacteria. Additionally the sponge will have to be boiled to kill any bacterial that is present when the dish is cleaned. You can also mist the sides of the enclosure to provide water and increase the humidity, but make sure you do not wet the substrate or cardboard to avoid mold, bacteria, mites, & fruit flies. Water may not need to be added if you provide regular fruit and vegetables as long as the humidity is adequate. We supply fresh water with polymer water crystals because we believe that standing water promotes mold & bacteria growth and increases the chance of accidental drowning. Water crystals also help to increase the humidity in the enclosure and decrease the need for misting. Water crystals are relatively inexpensive and can be easily purchased online, 2 oz of crystals will make 1 gallon of water.

For more information check out the "Dubia Roach" page on our website.

Dubia Roach Maintenance Schedule

Daily: Heat 1 end of enclosure to 100°F - 110°F, Check food & water crystals – just add if dishes are not dirty (sanitize bowls if soiled). Check area around food dishes for moisture/mold – if present, then frass must be removed. The dishes and enclosure must also be sanitized. Remove any leftover food scraps to prevent mold.

Weekly: Provide fresh citrus fruit (oranges are one of their favorites), Sanitize food & water crystal dishes. Cut in quarters and place on water dish. Remove the peel(s) the next day.

Monthly: Sort out feeders.

Occasional: (When frass is around 3-4 inches deep), Place roaches & egg flats in a temporary (or second) enclosure Remove frass and keep enough to have ½"-1" deep layer in enclosure after it is cleaned, throw out the rest or use some to start a second colony. Sanitize enclosure - Use dish soap or 10% bleach solution and soak for 1 hour. Rinse thoroughly & let dry completely. Return egg flats, roaches, food & water dishes to the enclosure (any bad egg flats should be replaced).