

## Dubia Roach (Blaptica Dubia) Care & Info Sheet

These are the basic instructions to grow and manage your Dubia roach colony. Dubia roaches are excellent feeder insects for a wide range of animals including reptiles, arachnids, amphibians, fish, birds, and insectivorous mammals. Dubia Roaches (Blaptica Dubia) are a live bearing roach species native to parts of Central and South America. Female Dubia roaches can live up to 2 years, with males living about 1 1/2. Dubias range in size from 1/8" nymphs to 2 1/2" adults, and are edible in all stages of their lifecycle. They do not have a hard exoskeleton so they are completely digestible and cannot cause impaction. They have 5-6 times more protein than the same sized cricket.

Dubia roaches cannot climb smooth surfaces and are more nutritious than many other insects commonly used for feeding reptiles. They are lower in fat than any of the "worms", and higher in protein & calcium than most of the other insects used as feeders. They do not smell, make noise, bite, fly, or carry parasites. You will still need to dust your roaches with calcium.

Setting up and taking care of a Dubia colony is easy and inexpensive so you can breed your own roaches and eliminate the need to buy insects. The length of time your colony will need to grow before it is self-sufficient will depend on the size of the colony you start with and the number/type of animals that you are feeding. Dubia roaches are reliable breeders and if your colony is not producing then you are doing something wrong. To breed Dubia roaches you will need an opaque enclosure, plastic shoeboxes for sorting, 6-8 egg flats, a heat source, food, & a water source. You will also need 1-2 plastic totes to hold the roaches during cleaning & sorting

### Dubia Roach Maintenance Schedule

**Daily:** Heat 1 end of enclosure to 100°F - 110°F, Check food & water crystals. Put food on floor of enclosure and add water crystals if the dish is not dirty. If the dish is dirty use a clean dish and sanitize the other one when you get a chance. Check area around water dish for moisture/mold. If present, then the damp frass and/or egg flats must be removed. Dry & sanitize the damp part of the enclosure and/or replace egg flats.

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

**Monthly (4-6 weeks):** Sort out feeders when needed after 4-6 weeks.

**Occasional:** When the frass is 3-4 inches deep place all of the roaches & the egg flats in a plastic tote, remove most of the frass. Keep enough to have 1/2"-1" deep layer in enclosure after the tote has been cleaned. Throw out the rest, use some to start a second colony, or use it in your garden. Sanitize the enclosure with 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).

For more information, to estimate the number and size of the insects you will need each month, or to purchase Dubia roaches please visit our website <https://www.southtexasdragons.com/dubia-roaches.html>.

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### **Building & Managing your Roach Colony**

Your animal's diet will fluctuate as they mature and at certain times of the year such as during brumination, breeding, shedding, etc. Your specific insect needs and the size of the colony purchased will determine the length of time you will need for your colony to become self-sustaining.

Our small colony is designed for 1 bearded dragon or anything else that eats the equivalent amount of insects. It will be able to supply all the insects you need in about 2-3 months if you leave it alone. If you take any roaches out of it then it will take longer depending, on the size of the roaches and how many you take. You can feed an infinite amount of animals that eat insects but you will have to let the colony grow longer before feeding out of it.

The small colony comes with 10 adult females which are each capable of producing 30-40 nymphs/month. This is the protein equivalent to about 1500-2000 1/8" crickets. The small colony also comes with 200 mixed size roaches (70 lg., 70 med., & 70 sm.). These are not food, they are what will grow your colony and provide the food for your dragon while you establish your colony. The mixed roaches are about 1/2 male and 1/2 female.

After 1 month the large roaches mature into breeders and start producing young. The 10 females have produced 300-400 new roaches and the other sm. & med roaches have grown. After the 8-12 weeks, you will have about 80 adult females which can produce about 8 times more quantity of roaches than you will need to feed 1 dragon.

At this time you will need to sort your colony. Put all of the roaches in a plastic tote. Remove all of the breeders and put them back in your colony. If your animals are big enough to eat the adult males remove the extra adult males to restore the colony to a 3 female:1 male ratio. From the roaches that are left remove all of the roaches that are 1/8"-1" long and return the rest to the colony to grow. Separate the roaches by size and return 25% of each size to the colony by weight. The roaches that are left are your feeders and should be put in your feeder box. This can be any kind of plastic box, cricket keeper, etc. All it needs is ventilation, egg crates, paper towel rolls, etc., food and a water dish. It does not need heat if kept at room temperature.

You are going to feed your animal a large quantity of smaller roaches, while the roaches you put back have time to grow and the adults produce more small roaches. You are feeding the roaches produced by all the extra breeders to buy time for your primary feeders to grow. This is comparable to eating sliders or a burger, they are the same thing just one is a lot smaller so you need to eat more of them. Since you are always putting back more (25%) roaches than are produced by the original 10 females, your colony will grow in size and in quantity.

Feed off all of the ones you took out. If they last 6 weeks do it again. Each time you do this you will be building your colony and feeding a smaller quantity of larger roaches. If they do not last 6 weeks, feed your dragon something else for 2-3 weeks then try it again. Any time the feeders last more than 6 weeks narrow the size range you are removing. After a few sortings you will be taking out all large feeder roaches, but not the female breeders.

Once you are removing 6 weeks of large roaches, your colony is self-sustaining and you can stabilize the size of your colony. First, stop putting back 25% of the roaches. Feeding off the extra breeders allows you to regulate the growth of your colony. Feeding off a high quantity of smaller roaches allows you to regulate the size of your colony. Feed off the extra breeders slowly, it is better to have too many than not enough. Remember to occasionally leave a couple of large male & female roaches for replacement breeders. If you want to slow down the growth of your colony but are not comfortable with feeding off your breeders, then turn off the heat or put it on a timer. At any time you can increase the size of your colony by allowing more of the large roaches to mature into breeders, and you can reduce the size of your colony by feeding off extra female breeders and a lot of smaller roaches.