

Care guide

Rhinoceros Beetle (*Xylotrupes ulysses*)



Rhinoceros Beetles are one of the largest species of beetles in Australia. With their rich dark body and large horns they are certainly a sight to behold. They get their name from the forked horns on the male's head. He uses this horn to show off to females and to fight other males.

This species is found in the rainforests of northern New South Wales to northern Queensland and are commonly found during the wet season as the beetles are attracted to bright lights. They can be found at the base of the large bright lights in car parks and petrol stations.

These beetles grow to around 70mm in length but are still able to fly. The larvae are cream coloured with a reddish head, and can be found in rotting organic matter, especially compost bins.

Rhinoceros beetles are harmless, despite the hissing noise they make when they are disturbed. This noise is made when the beetle rubs its abdomen against its wing covers (elytra). Rhinoceros beetles are great to handle.

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Food (adults): Fruits; banana and apple. Offer small pieces and replace each day to avoid the fruit fermenting. They will also feed on Stag beetle diet (3 parts banana, 1 part Maple syrup, 1 part natural yogurt). Offer a teaspoon of the Stag beetle diet in a small dish, discard and replace on a daily basis.

Water: Water does not need to be supplied in free form, however care must be taken to ensure enclosure conditions are maintained (below) to avoid dehydration.

Enclosure: Plastic tubs make ideal enclosures. The tub will need a secure lid and some ventilation, however the moisture level and humidity within the enclosure needs to be maintained at levels above 70%.

Substrate: Coco-peat is an ideal substrate for maintaining adult beetles. The substrate should be kept very moist (but not sodden) – there should be no free water pooling below the substrate. The substrate depth should be at least 30mm to allow the beetle to burrow. Some pulpy wood may be added to this, and some small logs are good for the beetle to cling to and these will help to prevent the beetle flipping onto its back when wandering around on the surface.

Temperature: The safe temperature range for these beetles is 18 -24°C. They will tolerate both higher and lower temperatures for short periods of time. Higher temperatures will result in much more activity, but also may result in shorter lifespan.

Life span: 12- 18 months total, (adult beetle lives for around 4 months)

Handling: Can be handled, but care must be taken to do so gently. Never forcibly pull them off any surface (including your hand), as this may result in damage to the beetle's feet or legs. Rhinoceros Beetles have very sharp curved tarsi (claws) on their feet and will lock into objects very well. If this occurs, allow the beetle to relax, then coax it forward by gently nudging the beetle from behind. You can gently lift the claws using your fingernails to encourage it to move on.

Adult Rhinoceros Beetles can fly. Never handle beetles in a situation where flight could result in damage (eg near operational ceiling fans) or loss (outside).

Common issues: Adult beetles are best kept separately to prevent any fighting between individuals which can result in damage to your beetle or even death.

For more information contact Minibeast Wildlife at info@minibeastwildlife.com.au