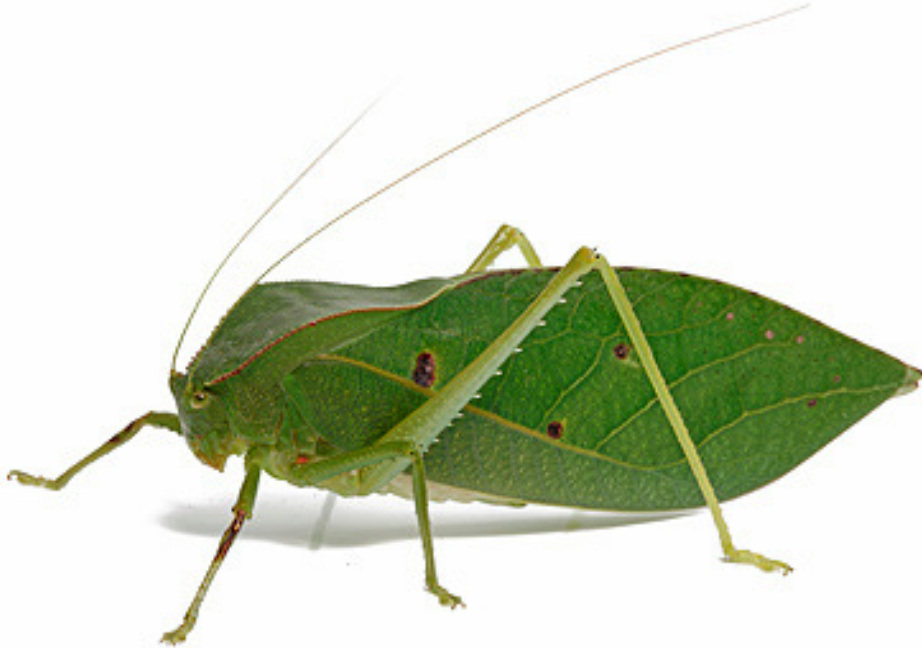


Care guide

Hooded Katydid (*Phyllophorella queenslandica*)



Hooded Katydid are common inhabitants of the tropical rainforests of eastern Australia, however due to their remarkable camouflage are not often found in the wild. They are known as Hooded Katydid due to the large box-like hood on their thorax behind their head. This is obvious even before adulthood. Their wings are highly veined to mimic leaves, and will even have irregular spots or patches on their wings to match the rainforest plants they live on. They grow to around 60mm in body length with females being larger than males.

During the day these katydids sit motionless upon green leaves. They have very long antennae that when at rest, will be folded back along either side of their body. They will also fold their hind legs up under the body to aid their leaf-like façade.

This species is capable of producing a defensive sound, which resembles a series of rapid hisses. Even relatively young nymphs can produce it, as it is created by rubbing the bases of the hind legs against the body.

In order to reproduce, male Hooded Katydid will transfer a spermatophore to the females. A spermatophore is a white-coloured mass that can sometimes be seen at the tip of the female's abdomen after mating has occurred. It contains sperm to fertilise the eggs. Females lay elongated rice-like eggs in the substrate using their ovipositor, which is a long sabre-like extension protruding from the end of the abdomen. The young will hatch out looking like miniature versions of their parents, and will shed their exoskeletons to grow.

Care guide

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Food: Orthopteran food mix. Foliage of a variety of plants including gum trees (*Eucalyptus spp*), bottle brush (*Callistemon*) and apple (*Malus domestica*) and some palm species.

Water: Mist spray the enclosure once a day. This will keep the enclosure damp and the humidity high. The katydids will drink from the moisture on the foliage and branches.

Enclosure: A suitable enclosure needs to be approximately 30 cm H x 25cm W x 20 cm D to adequately house 1 or 2 adults. A larger enclosure will be required for more specimens. The base of the enclosure can be covered in a substrate of coco-peat (available from garden supply shops) to a depth of at least 4cm. While a substrate of this type is not essential it will accommodate breeding. Sticks and branches should be placed within the enclosure as they are required for the insects to hang from whilst moulting.

Temperature: This species will do best at 24° – 28°C, but will tolerate 16 – 24°C and have a slower growth rate.

Life span: About one year.

Handling: These katydids have powerful mandibles, but are quite timid and are reluctant biters. They can be handled but are unpredictable and may leap away without warning.

Reproduction: These katydids can be housed in groups, so once mature mating will occur. The male will seek out the female, and deposit a spermatophore whilst his abdomen is locked with hers. When the female is ready she will begin laying individual eggs into the substrate. If you do not have a deep substrate the provision of a tub of moist coco-peat to a depth of 4cm is sufficient to enable the female to deposit her eggs. The eggs are small and rice-like in appearance, and will usually hatch about 3 months after being laid.

Common issues: If keeping these katydids in groups of high numbers, you may find that some individuals will be injured or disrupted during the delicate moulting process. If this happens, your katydids need more space.

NOTE: These animals are captive bred, and should not be released into the wild.

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