

GIANT DEVILS FLOWER MANTIS

Idolomantis diabolica

RANGE:

Distributed throughout East Africa: Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Somalia, Tanzania & Uganda.

HABITAT:

Semi moist savannah grasslands and into light scrubland.

DIET:

Variety of insects. Especially flying insects such as flies, moths, butterflies and beetles.

REPRODUCTION:

Sexually mature at about 4 to 6 weeks of age.

Mature females that are ready for breeding can be seen "calling" , lowering the tip of their abdomen and raising the wings slightly to expose more of the uppermost side of the abdomen, thus releasing pheromone to attract a mate. Males are cautious in approaching females for mating. Females have been known to cannibalize the male if he is not careful. Females deposit eggs in a well-insulated ootheca, from which come spring about 10 to 50 nymphs will hatch. Nymphs fed on small insects, such as houseflies etc. These nymphs eventually develop into an instar stage. Males will develop into adults after about 7 moultings, while females develop after 8 moultings.

POINTS OF INTEREST:

- One of the largest species of mantis that specialize in mimicking flowers. Females grow to about 13 cm (5 inches) and males are about 10 cm (4 inches) in length.
- Highly prized in pet trade due to its beauty and size. Information about the mantis is dominated by pet trade information.
- Colors on these mantis range from red to white to blue, purple and black.
- Known for having a "ferocious" nature.

