

# Breeding Beetles

## A Perfectly Normal Hobby



Precision balances are often used by private hobbyists to weigh beetle larvae. This may sound very strange: First of all what hobbyist is involved with beetles, and what beetles are we talking about here?

Beetle breeding is a perfectly normal hobby in Japan. Beetles are considered as good pets; they need little space, not much attention, they have fantastic colors and bizarre horns. The main species kept are rhinoceros beetles Dynastinae, stag beetles Lucanidae and Flower beetles Cetoniidae. Each bigger Japanese city has at least one shop that exclusively sells

beetles, beetle larvae and all breeding supply required - similar to aquarium shops in the rest of the world.

### Beetle fans outside Japan

Even in the rest of the world there are quite number of enthusiasts, who keep and breed beetles. Once a species has been bred successfully for the first time, normally a kind of competition arises for the breeder that manages to breed the largest specimen. Beetles have exoskeletons made out of chitin and, unlike other animals, do not grow any more once they transformed from larvae into beetle. The better the conditions for the larva, e.g. the quality of food, temperature and a few other conditions, the bigger the resulting beetle will be. There are beetles like the *Hercules beetle* Dynastes hercules that can attain sizes of 17 centimeters, the elephant beetle *Megasoma actaeon*, whose larvae can attain a weight of 200 grams and the metallic colored Cyclommatus metallifer whose mandibles can take up to almost two thirds of the entire body length.



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This and the incredible variety make beetles really good and entertaining pets. Considering that they undergo a complete metamorphosis (like butterflies) – there is even a very educative element for children and school classes. Plus beetle males tend to fight, which a lot of children in Japan let their pets do. Normally these fights are harmless bullying, but nonetheless exciting.



#### **The importance of weighing beetle larvae**

Balances are an important tool for breeders, as they need to check on the development of the beetle larva. The heavier a larva, the bigger the resulting beetle. Especially when new food items are tested, it is important to see if the larvae gain weight. Larval weight also helps to make predictions on the future size of the beetle. Last but not least, a picture of a larva on a balance is a good proof that one achieved the results as claimed – a good measure against fish tales. Once the larvae have undergone metamorphosis and become beetles, these are

displayed in terrariums – to the delight of the breeder.

Good balances to get accurate results are METTLER TOLEDO balances, as they stabilize very fast, even with larvae that are moving while they are weighed. They are also accurate enough to provide very detailed results. While Excellence balances are the optimal choice, New Classic balances are the more affordable option for hobbyists.

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