

## **Carboniferous Fact File**

### **Cockroach (*Dictyomylacris*)**

The cockroaches are one of the most ancient groups of insects, and this example is very little different from any cockroach you might find in your house – except for the size! The largest cockroaches today rarely get bigger than 15cm, but *Dictyomylacris* was a monster at nearly 40 cm long.

#### **A true survivor**

We don't know if this particular species could fly, but it is thought that cockroaches were among the first insects to take to the air in order to escape from predators and find new things to eat. Cockroaches have survived unchanged for millions of years because they are so good at making themselves at home. Their chewing mouthparts allow them to eat almost anything they find from fungi, rotting meat and fruit to damp wallpaper and flowers. They lay their eggs in a special sac that the female carries with her; this keeps the eggs safe and prevents them from drying out. Their good eyesight allows them to be nocturnal and so they avoid many of the predators that might otherwise eat them.

Cockroaches love heat and humidity even now – they must have loved the Carboniferous with its lush rainforests and tropical climate!