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Entomological Society of America Proposal Form for New Common Name

1. Proposed new common name: giant walkingstick

2. Previously approved common name (if any): none

3. Scientific name (genus, species, author): *Megaphasma denticrus* (Stål)

Order: Phasmatodea

Family: Diapheromeridae

Supporting Information

4. Please provide a clear and convincing explanation for why a common name is needed, possibly including but not limited to the taxon's economic, ecological, or medical importance, striking appearance, abundance, or conservation status:

Images are viewable at:

BugGuide [Species *Megaphasma denticrus* - Giant Walkingstick](#)

BugWood/IPM Images

<https://www.insectimages.org/browse/subthumb.cfm?sub=56885&order=169>

A video capture of the species is in a YouTube

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7abL58UWcPU>

5. Stage or characteristic to which the proposed common name refers.

From the description of this insect in the 1903 publication *The Phasmidae, or Walkingsticks, of the United States*:

"This is the largest walkingstick that occurs in the United States, a female before me measuring 145 mm., which is 5 mm. less than one in the collection of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia. This species suggest tropical forms more than anything else in our fauna, and the large size commands attention wherever seen."

Note: In this publication the genus name for this species was erected, and it is the only member of the genus *Megaphasma*, a name implying very large size.

Citation: Caudell, A.N. 1903. The Phasmidae, or Walkingsticks, of the United States. Proc. United States National Museum. Vol. XXVI, pages 863-885. {No. 1335}

6. Distribution (include references):

Largely concentrated in the south central United States including Texas, Louisiana, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Kansas, Missouri. Records extend to as far north as Wisconsin, and east to Indiana. Maps showing distribution records include:

BugGuide [Species *Megaphasma denticrus* - Giant Walkingstick](#)

Global Biodiversity Information Facility <https://www.gbif.org/species/1411531>

7. Principal hosts (include references):

The entry in the [Animal Diversity website](#) describes food habits as: “This species tends to feed on foliage of grasses and woody plants, especially on grapevines and oaks. It will also feed on leaves of trees and can occasionally cause deforestation. After hatching from their eggs in the springtime, young nymphs feed mainly on understory shrubs. Among the adults, several host plants are primarily fed upon such as the basswood, the birch, dogwood, hackberry, hickory, oak, pecan, and wild cherry. (Drees and Jackman, 1998)”

Citation included in above entry: Jackman, J.A. and B.M. Drees. 1998. *A Field Guide to Common Texas Insects*. Houston, Texas: Gulf Publishing Company.

An entry in the website [Elytra and Antennae](#), a site that apparently focuses on large insects, provides the following information on diet:

“*M. denticrus* eats many different foods including, but not limited to: oak, apple, cherry, rose, blackberry, raspberry, and willow.”

8. Please provide multiple references indicating clearly that the proposed name is already established and ideally widespread in use. If the name has been newly coined for purposes of this application, please state so:

BugGuide [Species *Megaphasma denticrus* - Giant Walkingstick](#)

Wikipedia uses the name [giant walkingstick](#)

Giant walkingstick is used in *Kaufman Field Guide to Insects of North America*. Eric R. Eaton and Kenn Kaufman. 2006

[Animal Diversity Web](#). University of Michigan. Museum of Zoology

Phasmida Species Profile Online [species *Megaphasma denticrus*](#)

Maginnis, T.L., C.L. Cool and J.L. Muniz. 2008. Some observations on the mating behavior of the giant walkingstick, *Megaphasma denticrus* (Orthoptera: Phasmidae). *Texas Journal of Science* 60(1): 57-62.

Wilkins, O.P. & O.P. Breland. 1951. Notes on the giant walking stick, *Megaphasma denticrus* (Stål) (Orthoptera: Phasmatidae). *Texas Journal of Science* 3: 305-310.

Macrae, T.C. 2009. [America's longest insect](#)

Quinn, M. 2012. [Texas walkingstick information](#)

[Walkingsticks \(Stick Insects\)](#). Missouri Department of Conservation.

9. Please identify any common names in use (include references) that have been applied to this taxon other than the one herein proposed. Please justify why each alternate name is inadequate:

None

10. Please identify any other organisms to which your proposed common name *could* apply, giving careful consideration to closely related taxa. Please justify why the proposed common name is (i) unsuitable for each of those taxa and/or (ii) better suited for the proposed taxon:

None. Although there are many walkingsticks elsewhere that are much larger/longer than any found in North America, *Megaphasma detricus* is the longest member of the order native to the United States.

11. Please document your efforts to consult with entomologists (including taxonomic specialists), colleagues, or other professionals who work with the taxon as to the suitability and need for the proposed common name. Please note that this is an important element of your proposal; proposals that do not document these steps are less likely to be successful.

It is difficult to find North American researchers with this group who have taxonomic interests/expertise.

The primary international group working with this order, apparently headquartered in Germany*, maintains a [Phasmid Species File](http://phasmida.speciesfile.org/Common/basic/Taxa.aspx?TaxonNameID=1202379), a database of all species. The species profile for *Megaphasma dentricus* carries the common name "giant walkingstick" <http://phasmida.speciesfile.org/Common/basic/Taxa.aspx?TaxonNameID=1202379>

* North American experts listed with this organization appear to be German.

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