



Caring For Bearded Dragons

For those who have an interest in owning reptiles, bearded dragons are a great place to start! These friendly little lizards from "Down Under" come with a big personality and are relatively easy to care for. They are gentle beasts and an excellent choice for companionship.

Facts:

- Lifespan 6-12 years
- Weight 10-18oz
- Adult Size: 18-24in
- Native to Australia
- Skin color darkens when threatened
- Omnivorous
- Sexual maturity: 1-2yrs
- Incubation: 60-80 days
- Clutch size 18-24 eggs

Common Problems:

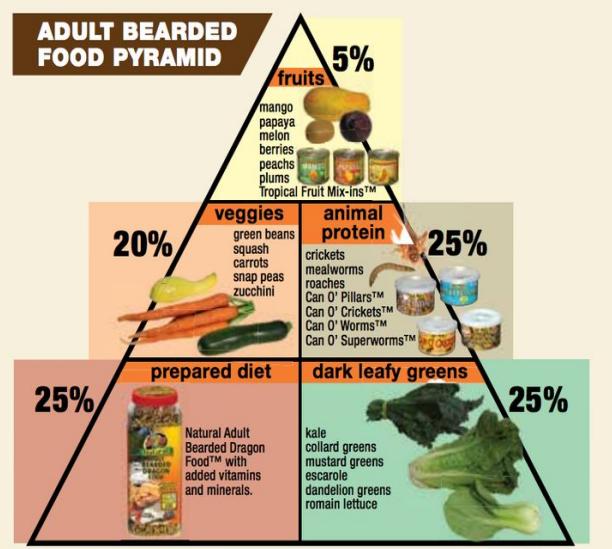
- Anorexia
- Egg binding
- Intestinal parasites
- Metabolic bone disease
- Respiratory illnesses
- Traumatic wounds
- Skin and jaw infections
- Infectious mouth rot

Preventative Care:

- Complete physical exam every 6-12 months
- Yearly fecal exam to check for parasites
- Annual blood work to monitor organ function
- Routine hygiene, nail trims, and grooming

DIET ESSENTIALS

Meat	Greens	Vegetables	Fruit
Crickets	Kale	Broccoli	Figs
Meal worms	Collards	Okra	Kiwi
King worms	Parsley	Peas	Melon
Wax worms	Clover	Green beans	Apples
Earthworms	Dandelion greens	Courgette	Mango
Cockroaches	Turnip greens	Butternut squash	Papaya
Locust	Mustard Greens	Squash	Dates
	Endive	Sweet potato	Peaches
	Rocket	Bell pepper	Apricots
	Coriander		Plums

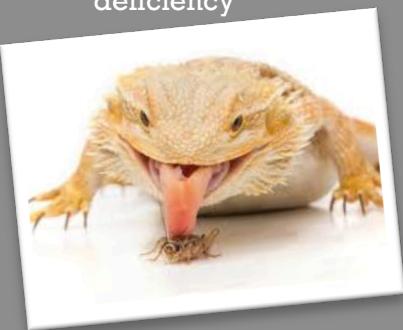




TOXIC

Say NO to...

- Avocados- toxic to the heart
- Rhubarb- high levels oxalic acid are deadly
- Fireflies- any insects that glow are toxic to reptiles
- Insects captured in the wild- these insects may have parasites
- Iceberg lettuce- mostly water, with little to no nutritional value
- Spinach and beet tops- can be fine in small quantities, but larger amounts may cause calcium deficiency



Fresh, clean water should be available to your beardie around the clock. A large shallow pan of water should also be placed in the enclosure for soaking.

Each day, change out the water in both dishes for fresh water. On a weekly basis, sanitize the water dishes with a mild dish detergent and rinse thoroughly before adding water.

More on Diet

All food items offered to your Bearded Dragon should be no bigger than the space between his/her eyes. Baby and juvenile beardies should be offered crickets or another appropriate protein source 2-3 times daily. Offer as many as your beardie can eat in a 5-10 minute span. Young bearded dragons can eat anywhere from 20-60 crickets in a day. Fresh greens should also be offered daily. Prey insects for young reptiles can be dusted daily with a calcium/vitamin D3 supplement, like Rep-cal and weekly with a multi-vitamin, such as Herptivite.

Adult dragons only need to eat prey items once a day, along with fresh greens. Insects being fed to adults should be dusted with calcium approximately 3 times weekly and with vitamins once a week. All uneaten prey items should be removed from the enclosure.

Normal Behavior

Bearded dragons are considered social animals in captivity and tolerate handling and interaction with humans well. They usually adapt well to a new environment and bond to their human caretakers. They are diurnal; meaning active during the day, in captivity, but in the wild is known to spend the hottest part of the day in cool burrows. Therefore, they may spend a portion of their day in a hiding spot. It is important to note that male bearded dragons are territorial and should be housed separately. In addition, never house reptiles of a different species together.

Environment

Your reptile should be housed in a well-ventilated, screen-topped tank. A 10-20 gallon tank is sufficient for those less than a year old and up to 55 gallon enclosure for adults.

Temperature should be 75-85°F in the coolest part of the habitat and 90-105°F in the basking area. Maintain less than 50% humidity, mist as needed. We recommend using infrared lamps and ceramic heat emitters rather than hot rocks, as the direct contact can lead to serious burns. Ultraviolet (UV)

light must be provided in the UVB spectrum 10-14 hours/day. Lack of UVB can cause metabolic bone disease via inhibiting calcium absorption. These bulbs must be replaced every 6 months, even if the light isn't out because the amount of UVB emitted decreases over time. Bedding material should be reptile carpet, newspaper, or paper towel. AVOID shavings, sand, corncob, and fiber pellets as they can irritate the respiratory tract or cause intestinal blockage. The habitat should also include branches, rocks, hollow logs, and a hide box.

Shedding

Bearded dragons regularly shed their skin. To assist in normal shedding cycles, ensure the humidity of the habitat is correct. To facilitate a more difficult shed, you may bathe your lizard in a large container that allows his/her entire body to be immersed. You could also provide a shed box or a hide box with sphagnum moss that will aid in the shedding process.

Signs of a Healthy Beardie

- Active and alert
- Clear eyes
- Full tail
- Does not hide for extended periods of time
- Healthy skin
- Droppings are firm
- Eating and drinking regularly

Red Flags

- Inappetence/weight loss
- Mucous in mouth or nose
- Lethargy
- Bumps, sores, or abrasions
- Labored breathing
- Paralysis of limbs
- Abnormal feces

