

REPTILIA

We Specialize in Small Animals and Reptiles



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BEARDED DRAGON CARE

Bearded dragons come from Eastern Australia. They can grow up to 50 cm in length (Including tail). They can live for up to 12 years in captivity.

HOUSING

- As large vivarium as possible should be provided to enable room for exercise, and a thermal gradient to be created along the length of the tank (hot to cold). Wooden or glass vivarium are ideal as this provides the lizard with some visual security and ventilation can be provided at Dragons level.
- Good ventilation is required and additional ventilation holes may need to be created.
- Hides are required to provide some security. Artificial plants, cardboard boxes, plant pots, logs or commercially available hides can be used. They should be placed both at the warm and cooler ends of the tank.
- Substrates suitable for housing Bearded Dragons include fine reptile sand, kenaf, Astroturf, carpets and some of the commercially available substrates. It is important that the substrates either cannot be swallowed, or if they are, do not cause blockages as this can prove fatal. Wood chip-based or corncob substrates should never be used for this reason.
- The vivarium should be cleaned out at least once a week with F10 disinfectant or similar disinfectant and spot cleaned daily to help prevent diseases.

TEMPERATURES AND HUMIDITY

- Reptiles are ectothermic so a heat source is required.
- Typically, a spot area is created using a spot bulb, providing a basking temperature of 30-35°C. This should be kept on all day. Temperatures must be measured to ensure the tank is not overheating especially in a small vivarium. The cool end should be maintained at 27°C, and the warm end should be maintained at 33°C and not exceed 35°C.
- Belly heat can be provided with a heat mat or heat pad (bellow the substrate or AstroTurf). This should be set on a thermostat so that the overnight temperature does not drop below 20°C.
- Temperatures should be measured with a maximum/minimum thermometer. During the cold winter months careful checking is required to ensure the heat sources are keeping the tank sufficiently warm. Heat sources should be guarded to prevent thermal burns.
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- Humidity should be checked with a hygrometer and kept low.

COMPANIONS

- In general, the happiest Dragon is the solitary Dragon lizard. Adults can be maintained in pairs if breeding is desired.

LIGHTING

- Bearded dragons must be exposed to UVB light.
- The best sources are the mercury vapor lamps which give out heat as well. This will need to be on all day for 8-12 hours and at an appropriate distance from the lizard as recommended by the manufacturer. A small branch or rock can be placed below the basking site. Care should be taken using mercury vapour bulbs in a small vivarium as temperatures may become too high and these lamps cannot be fitted to a thermostat.
- Alternatively, other UVB bulbs are available (please ask for further information on UV light in reptiles)
- All UV-b bulbs should be checked regularly for their UV output and should be changed at least every 10-12 months.

WHAT TO FEED

- Bearded dragons are omnivores so will eat both live food and vegetables. However, they need less live food as they age. Dark leafy salad items and weeds should be the main vegetable matter offered.
- Juveniles will take a higher percentage of live food such as house crickets, black crickets and locusts. Mealworms should only be given in moderation. Waxworms should only be given as occasional treats.
- Live food should be gut loaded with a high calcium content supplement (8% of calcium in the dry matter) and many products are commercially available. It is worth checking the label for the calcium content. Live food should also be dusted with a high calcium balancer with little or no phosphorous content. Live food should be fed immediately after dusting and removed if not eaten within 30 minutes. Vegetables should also be dusted.
- Water should always be available and a container is required which will allow the lizard to submerge completely. This should be changed daily. Regular bathing may also be enjoyed.

SALMONELLA

- All reptiles can potentially carry Salmonella.
- However, it is rarely a cause of illness in reptiles and treatment is not required.
- It can be transmitted to people (especially young children or those who are immuno-compromised) so good hygiene after handling the reptile is important. Generally washing your hands in soap is sufficient. There are commercially available disinfectants that can be used as an alternative.

ANNUAL HEALTH CHECKS

We recommend annual health checks every year for pet reptiles as medical problems are more easily treated if detected at an early stage.