



BEARDED DRAGON CARESHEET

Bearded dragons can make fantastic pets! They are active, inquisitive and fascinating to watch. There are a number of species that differ in size and temperament greatly and the following information is provided for as a general guide.

Housing: The enclosure set-up depends on the size and age of the dragon. Substrate options (enclosure floor covering) include newspaper, recycled paper cat litter, artificial turf, sand and some commercially produced reptile bedding. All of these options have pros and cons so the decision often comes down to the individual. The cage and substrate should be cleaned regularly with 'spot' clean as necessary. Any items in the cage should be cleaned with a safe product such as diluted F10 (we commonly recommend a 1:500 ratio with water).

Many bearded dragons are territorial and in most cases they should be housed separately.

A shallow water bowl can be offered but ensure that the dragon can't drown in it. It is also a good idea to spray them every few days with water to encourage them to drink. Avoid large water bowls, as many dragon species come from dry areas & prefer lower humidity. You can also lightly spray the interior of the enclosure periodically as dragons often like licking up the droplets.

Heating: It is very important that they are provided with a 'temperature gradient' in their enclosure. This means they need a 'hot' end and a 'cool' end. Temperatures should be monitored with thermometers at both of these ends. Ensure there is adequate ventilation. The hot/basking area end should be heated with a thermostatically controlled ceramic or reflector globe to create a basking temperature of 35-45C. The cool end should be around 15-20C to allow your dragon to escape the heat if desired. Overnight temperatures should not fall below 20C at the hot end of the cage. The use of heat mats or weaker ceramic heat lamps may be required to achieve this.

Lighting: Bearded dragons have strict requirements with respect to UVB light supplementation as they rely on UVB light rays to be able to adequately produce vitamin D3 in their skin. Vitamin D3 is essential for proper calcium metabolism in dragons and to help prevent metabolic bone





disease. UVB light can be provided by artificial 'UV-lights', however there is no substitute for natural unfiltered sunlight and it is recommended that dragons should be placed in sunlight for 20-30 minute periods at least 2-3 times a week. When doing this ensure the dragon is enclosed safely in an escape proof/predator proof cage. The sunlight should not pass through any glass or plastic as these will filter out UVB rays. Make certain the dragon has access to shade and cannot overheat.

Most artificial UV sources designed for reptiles need to be placed at a minimum length from the reptile obtaining the light. Furthermore, the effective UVB emission lifespan of these lights is usually in the vicinity of 3-6 months, so they will need to be replaced at least every 6 months. Recommended day and night cycles for dragon species vary on the season with around 12 hours light and 12 hours dark generally recommended in the summer months.

Handling: Most dragons can become very used to being handled but over handling can be stressful. Support the whole body of the dragon from underneath. Particularly the fore & hind limbs. Avoid squeezing them.

Feeding: Most bearded dragons are omnivorous. They should be fed a variety of insects (crickets, roaches, moths, silk-worms, beetles etc) and vegetables with small amounts of fruits.

Insects should be gut-loaded (fed a 'gut-loading powder' that then increases their nutritional value) and then dusted with calcium/vitamin/mineral powder just before being offered. Salad greens/vegies offered can include Asian greens, endive, dandelions, mustard greens, sweet potato, squash, carrots, beans & peas. Occasional fruits such as apple, pear & melons can be offered



Juveniles should be fed once every 1-2 days and adults every 2-7 days.

Health care: It is recommended that you have your dragon vet-checked every 6-12 months. It is a good idea to regularly weigh and record the body weight of your dragon. In between these times they can be transported individually in tied cotton bags. Ensure that they can't escape or overheat. Quarantine any newly acquired individuals for at least a month before introducing them.

If you have any further questions please don't hesitate to contact us.

