



A BETTER LIFE FOR EXOTIC PETS

BEARDED DRAGON CARE GUIDE

Native to: Semi-arid/arid landscape in Australia.

Habitat: Woodland and rocky desert terrain.

Behaviour: Diurnal lizards that will actively bask in heat and light.

Social: Solitary.

Size: Range between 18-24 inches, including tail.

Lifespan: Around 10-15 years.



THE BEARDED DRAGON

Pogona vitticeps

Eyes Closed:

Bearded Dragons will often close their eyes when being stroked or held. This is something they do when they feel nervous but it isn't something to worry about.

Third Eye:

Beardies have a special scale located on the top of their head, used to detect shadows - or potential predators.

Cloaca-what?

Beardies have a single, multi-purpose orifice. Not only do they poo & wee from here, but they also reproduce from here too.

Black Beard:

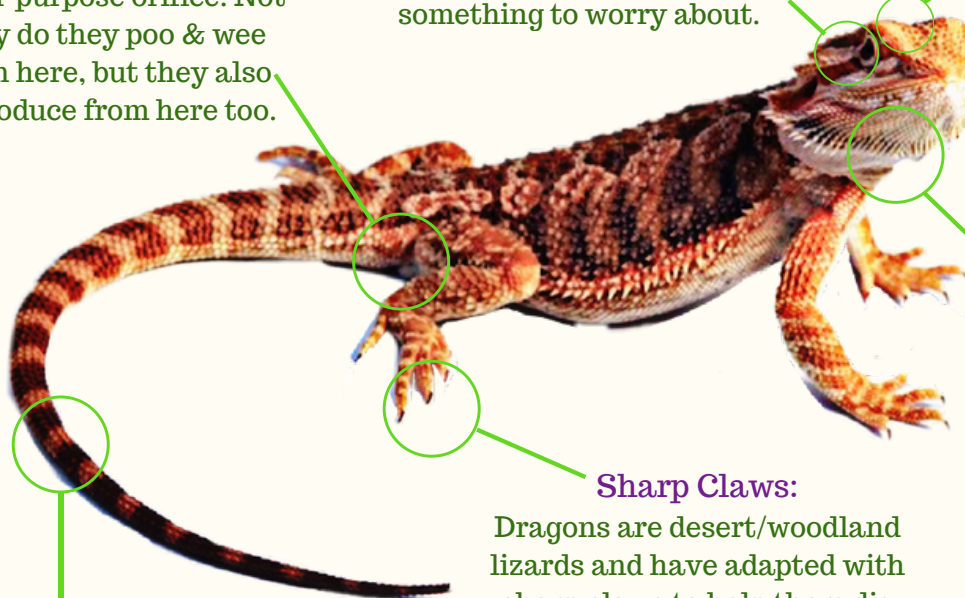
Bearded Dragons are very expressive and when threatened or wanting to breed, they will inflate their beard and turn it black. Black beards can also be a sign of illness if occurring for a long time.

Sharp Claws:

Dragons are desert/woodland lizards and have adapted with sharp claws to help them dig and forage.

Long Tails:

Beardies have long tails, which they use to express themselves e.g. an erect tail means they are alert!



DIETS

Bearded Dragons eat a mixed diet of live insects and greens.

Up to 6 months, they should be fed a few staple insects twice daily. Between 6-12 months, they should be fed the same, but once daily. 12 months and over should be fed a few staple insects three times a week. Treats are offered once a week.

Salad should be offered fresh everyday. Until they reach 12 months, they may not eat the salad, which is okay. After this point, they should be eating mainly salad.

If, as a healthy adult, a bearded dragon is refusing to eat their greens, you can reduce/stop feeding live insects to “force” them to eat their greens more.

LIVE FOOD OPTIONS



Crickets

These are a staple insect. Can be noisy and may bite. Good all round nutrition.



Dubias

These are a staple insect, high in protein and easy to breed.



Hopper

These are a staple insect. Easy to keep and good all round nutrition.



Morio Worm

These are a treat insect. They can give a nasty bite and are quite high in fat.



Wax Worm

These are a treat insect. They are like chocolate to beardies and very high in fat.

To ensure the live feeders contain the right nutrients, we feed them an appropriate diet of fruit, vegetables and meal prior to offering them to our dragons.

SALAD OPTIONS



Rocket



Frisee



Sweet Potato



Watercress



Dandelion

Salad should be prepared, washed and chopped before being offered on a feeding dish in the mornings.

SUPPLEMENTS

Calcium:

They will require additional calcium to promote bone growth and development.

We ensure that insects and salad are dusted with calcium powder on Mondays, Thursdays and Saturdays.

Nutrobal:

Nutrobal is a multi-vitamin powder, which includes vitamin D3. This is vital to promote calcium absorption.

We dust insects and salad in Nutrobal on Wednesdays

WATER

Fresh water should always be available to any animal, bearded dragons included. To avoid excessive humidity, we use a small water dish on the cool side of the enclosure.

ENCLOSURE EQUIPMENT



Vivarium Brands:

Repti-Life, Viperia, VivExotic and Pro Viv are our recommended brands for the vivarium.



Heat Bulb Holder:

Any ceramic heat bulb holder will be suitable. Arcadia is a good brand, but most brands can't go wrong with this piece of kit. The protective cage is much the same, just ensure it can easily be opened to change the bulb.



Dimming Thermostat:

Arguably the most important piece of equipment, this controls the power to the heat bulb to maintain a steady temperature. Habistat or Microclimate are recommended brands.

UVB:

The Arcadia Pro-T5 Desert unit is what we recommend at 39W and 12%.



Heat Bulb:

The Arcadia halogen heat bulb is our recommended basking spot lamp. A normal white spot lamp would also be okay. Wattage depends on your enclosure size.

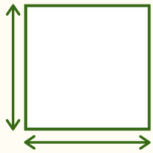


Digital Thermometer x2:

Allows you to check the temperature is correct in basking spot and cool side.

Buying items second hand can be a great way to save money, however you will not get any warranty when doing so, so use caution. For vivariums or décor, ensure the items are thoroughly disinfected before use. We don't recommend second hand items that are made of wood or other porous materials.

ENCLOSURE SET-UP



Space:

Dragons need plenty of space! A vivarium with an absolute minimum of 4x2x2ft is necessary.



Lighting:

They require high levels of UVB. A 12% T5 bulb is recommended, with total darkness at night.



Temperature:

A basking spot of 38-43°C and cool area of 30°C is necessary, with a drop to 18°C at night.



Humidity:

Low humidity suits dragons best. 10% in the basking area and no more than 30% overall.



Substrate:

To better replicate their natural environment a combination of coarse/rocky sand/soil and rock formations will suit a bearded dragon best. Avoid fine sands and definitely no calcium-sand!



Décor:

A semi-open basking area will encourage a bearded dragon to bask under their heat lamp, so avoid clutter here. They benefit from some low-level climbing and digging opportunities.

EXAMPLE



The example above is using recommended heating/lighting and uses live plants. Fake plants work just as well and require much less maintenance.

MAINTENANCE

Spot clean daily, removing any faeces/urates.

Fully change substrate when needed - this should be done approximately once every couple of months.

Clean decor items when soiled - fully disinfect monthly.

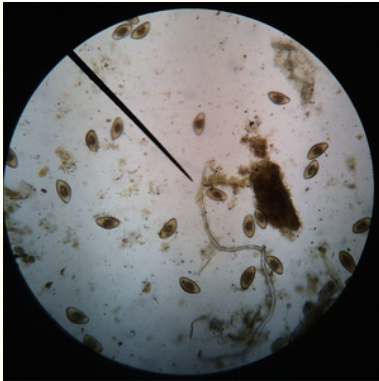
Change water regularly - fully disinfect the bowl weekly.

Replace the UVB bulb as per manufacturer guidelines.

COMMON HEALTH PROBLEMS

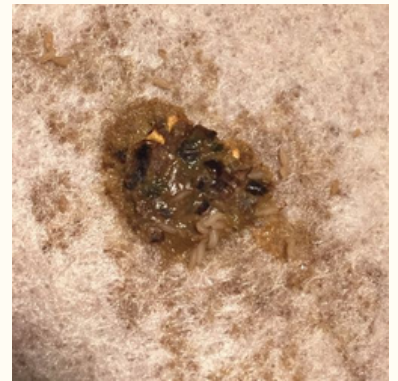
The below are a look at some common health problems you may see. It is still, ALWAYS recommended to seek veterinary assistance for anything out of the ordinary.

Internal Parasites



Bearded Dragons are prone to getting internal parasites. Symptoms may be reduced appetite, diarrhea or sometimes none at all. It's best to get a faecal test done every year to check if they have any in the gut.

If your dragon has worms, we recommend removing all loose substrate until treated. A vet will be able to prescribe a worm treatment, usually an oral medicine. A second faecal test will tell you they are clear.



Metabolic Bone Disease



MBD is a condition where the dragon has not had enough calcium and vitamin D3 to promote healthy bone growth. Limbs will appear deformed or "rubbery" and they may have swollen joints and struggle to move.

It is recommended to seek a vet's opinion if you start to notice these signs. They may prescribe liquid calcium. If the disease is too severe and interferes with quality of life, euthanasia may be suggested.

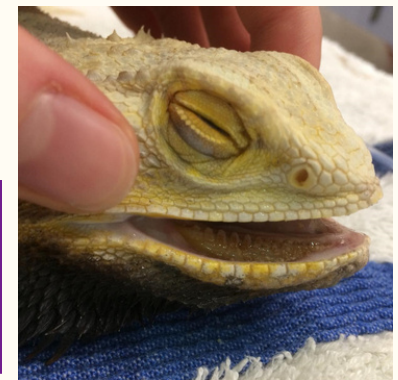


Tartar Build-Up

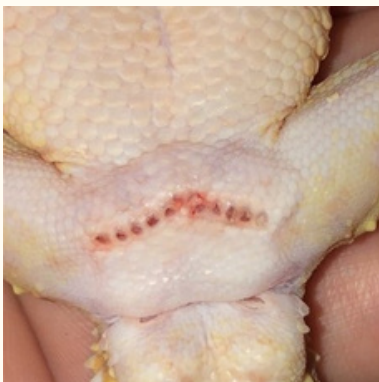


Beardies are prone to having a build up of tartar on their teeth. It can eventually lead to mouth infections. It's noticeable as brown deposits on the teeth, ranging from mild, to quite heavy.

A diet with reduced soft foods and little fruit, are good for preventing tartar. If you see your dragon's teeth looking brown, seek veterinary advice, as they may be able to scale and polish the teeth to prevent further damage.



Blocked Femoral Pores



Femoral pores are near the cloaca of a dragon, and are more obvious in males as they secrete hormones from them. They often become blocked when there is nowhere to rub them on in the enclosure.

A warm bath may help soften the blockages, and assisting by rubbing with a soft toothbrush can help once soaked. Ensure there is some rough bark or stone in the enclosure for them to rub them on.

