

Care & Information Sheet

Bearded Dragon

Pogona vitticeps



Bearded dragons are a type of ancient lizard, originally from the deserts of central Australia. “Bearded” refers to a flap of skin under the chin they extend when disturbed. They are usually very even-tempered, and seem to tolerate human interaction. They will spend part of the day in a hiding spot in their habitat. Male dragons are territorial and should be housed separately. The average size is 12 to 18 inches long with half of this being its tail. With proper care and nutrition they can live 3 to 10 years.

Habitat

- A glass habitat, 10-20 gallons with a tight-fitting screen lid for juveniles. Adults will need a tank that is appropriate to their size.
- Never place habitat in direct sunlight or in a drafty area.
- Provide a hide area of branches & potted non-toxic plants or a hide box in the tank; include a rock or log for basking.
- Use a basking light at one end of the tank and the other end should be kept as a cooling area.
- Temperature gradient (100° F. for the warm end and 70° F. for the cool end)
- Lighting – Provide needed UVB rays with full spectrum fluorescent light for 10 to 12 hours a day. Incandescent light is needed for the basking area.
- Substrate – Calcium based sand is recommended; as silica based sand may be ingested and cause impaction.

Food & Water

- Feed adult dragons 3–5 times a week. Feed juveniles every day and provide mealworms 24-hours a day (for multiple dragons) in general, juveniles will eat more live food, adults will eat mostly vegetation.
- Bearded dragons require a 30% mixed vegetables and fruits, 70% gut-loaded (recently fed) insects, provide a multiple vitamin/mineral supplement once or twice a week and calcium daily.
- Clean, fresh, chlorine-free water in a shallow bowl that cannot be tipped over should be changed daily.

Maintenance

- Remove feces daily.
- Thoroughly clean the tank at least once a week. Place the bearded dragon aside in a secure habitat. Scrub the tank and furnishings with a 3% bleach solution, rinse thoroughly with water, removing all smell of bleach. Dry the tank and furnishings; and add clean substrate.
- A light misting shower is recommended every other week to keep skin humidified and easy to shed, the tank, however, should never be damp.
- Carefully clip toenails when too long.

Supplies

Habitat	Non-Toxic Plants & Branches	Water Bowl - Small
Tight Fitting Screen Lid	Live Crickets & Meal Worms	Basking lamp & Fluorescent light
Calcium Based Sand	Calcium Supplement	Thermometer/Humidity Gauge
Basking Rock or Log	Vitamin/Mineral Supplement	Book About Bearded Dragons

Health

Always wash your hands before and after handling your bearded dragon or the habitat contents to help prevent *Salmonella* and other infectious diseases.

If you notice any of the following signs, check habitat temperature and humidity levels, ensure habitat is clean and water and food is available. If everything appears OK you should consult with an exotic animal veterinarian for advice.

- Gastro-intestinal Disease - Runny stools, caked or smeared stool around the vent area, and loss of appetite caused by bacterial or parasitic infection.
- Metabolic Bone/Vitamin Deficiency - Inability to absorb calcium due to insufficient UVB light. If untreated, can lead to a disorder characterized by deformities and softened bones, swollen limbs and lethargy. Provide ample UVB lighting
- Respiratory Disease - Labored breathing, runny nose, swollen eyes. Can be caused by temperatures that are too cold. Ensure proper lighting, water, and basking conditions

For information regarding bearded dragons & disease, contact the Center for Disease Control at <http://www.cdc.gov/healthypets>

NOTE: The information contained in this document is for general reference only. Please consult a veterinarian for medical advice and concerns.

Sources: *The General Care and Maintenance of Bearded Dragons* by Phillippe de Vosjoli & R. Mailloux
Your Bearded Dragon's Life by Liz Palika and Richard Pauli