

Prehistoric Pets Care Sheet

Bearded Dragons (*Pogona vitticeps*)

General Information

Bearded Dragons come from the arid areas of Australia where it is dry and hot. Adult Bearded Dragons can reach 18-23 inches in length and can live up to 12 years. Bearded Dragons can be housed in groups, however, you can run into some problems. Babies will sometimes dominate smaller cage mates and this can cause them not to get enough food or not eat at all. Larger cage mates will also bite off toes and pieces of tail, further stressing smaller animals. If you decide to keep multiple Bearded Dragons together, pay attention to their behavior and separate them if necessary. Adult male Bearded Dragons will also fight and it is best to keep them in separate enclosures. Adult Bearded Dragons may brumate in the winter, which is similar to hibernation. When Bearded Dragons are experiencing brumation they typically will not eat and are inactive most of the day. This winter slowing is normal and you need to reduce the temperature in the cage to 75-80 degrees during the day and 60-70 degrees at night. This slowing down period can last 1-4 months. You will notice increased activity when this period is over and at that time you need to raise the temperatures back to normal.



Temperature and UV Lighting

Bearded dragons love heat and require temperatures under the heat light to range from 90-100 degrees and night time temperatures can range from 65-70 degrees. Proper temperature allows the Bearded Dragons to properly digest food and the immune system to function normally.

Bearded dragons require 10-14 hours a day of UVB light. This light enables the bearded dragon to produce vitamin D3. The vitamin D produced by UVB metabolizes the calcium in the lizards' diet. In general it's what makes bearded dragons' bones hard and without it they usually die. This process of inadequate UVB and calcium is called Metabolic Bone Disease. Also it is very important to change your UVB light every 6-8 months, after this time the light stops producing adequate UVB. If you're not sure if your UV light is still producing UVB, bring it in and we'll be happy to test the light for you.

Calcium

Bearded dragons also require a calcium and vitamin supplement. This supplement works with the UVB light allowing the lizard to receive the proper amounts of calcium and vitamins. This should be used every day as babies and reduced to 1-2 times a week as adults. Calcium is sold in a powder form and is sprinkled on the crickets and vegetables that you feed your Bearded Dragon. You should apply a very light coating to the food items, being careful not to waste any excess powder.

Bedding

Different beddings have positives and negatives when used for reptiles. The best type of bedding for bearded dragons would be some type of fine sand. Certain types of sand can cause impactions in the intestine and kill baby bearded dragons. We feel that these types of impactions are rare and we have never personally encountered this problem.

Water

Bearded dragons do not typically drink a lot of water. Most of their water intake comes from eating crickets and vegetables. Water should be given twice a week as babies by soaking the lizard in a shallow dish of water for about 5 minutes. The bearded should be able to stand in the water without having to swim. If soaking is inconvenient for you, a water dish inside the cage will work fine.

Feeding

Baby bearded dragons should be fed appropriate sized crickets, waxworms, and mealworms, and mixed vegetables. Ideal vegetables would include romaine lettuce, green leaf lettuce, mustard greens, kale, and dandelion greens.

Cleaning and Handling

The terrarium should be cleaned as necessary. Any fecal matter or left over food should be cleaned out several times a week. The bedding should be completely changed once a month. The inside of the terrarium can be cleaned out with an appropriate reptile cage cleaner. We recommend Natural Chemistry's Healthy Habitat. Fresh clean water should always be provided. Bearded dragons can be handled on a daily basis, just be careful not to drop them. Always wash your hands before and after handling them.

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