

----- Feeding

The largest prey should be no bigger than 1/2 of the size of the head of the lizard you are feeding. Make sure you are present as live prey can & will fight back causing an injury to your pet. Their natural diet is on small mammal eggs, bugs & other reptiles including snakes. Supplement with diced fruits & moist vegetables (remember to keep the food fresh). 'Leafy' greens which are high in calcium; kale, argula, collard & mustard greens, parsley, dandelion greens and flowers, endives, radish, carrot and turnip tops. Mixed into the greens may be many other veggies such as squash, corn, peas, carrots (shredded), sweet potato, cucumber, zucchini, green peppers, chard... also chopped fruit such as cantaloupe, apple, blueberries, peaches, pears, grapes, plums, raspberries... all chopped finely to avoid choking.

Seek veterinary attention if your pet changes Behaviour or becomes inactive; this may indicate the pet has an illness.

As a pet owner, you are responsible for proper pet practices. Be prepared to take an ill pet to a Veterinarian & know which Veterinarian in your area can treat your pet.



check-list ✓

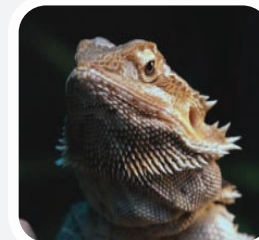
Your pet Bearded Dragon requires...

- Aquarium or Terrarium of appropriate size
- Red light / Heat source
- UVB Light (day use)
- Blue Light (*optional-for night use)
- Under-tank heater or 'heated rock'
- Water dish or bowl (*optional)
- Substrate or bedding material
- Caves/Dens (*optional)
- Vines & branches (for climbing)
- Misting bottle (simple plant sprayer for water)
- Thermometer
- Food dish for fresh fruits & veg'
- Tightly sealable box for keeping 'live' food(insects)



Bearded Dragon

- Size: average length 50 cm. Well fed & cared for can reach 60 cm. in length.
- Life Span: 8 - 10 years on average in captivity, although they may live longer.



----- Temperament

Bearded dragons live in the arid, rocky, semi-desert regions and arid open woodlands of Australia. They are adept climbers, spending time on branches and in bushes, even found on fence posts when living near human habitation. They also bask on rocks and exposed branches in the mornings and afternoons. Like most desert dwellers, bearded dragons spend the hottest part of the day in underground burrows and are well adapted to the cool desert nights. Dragons are social animals and interested in their surroundings. Bearded Dragons are found in a variety of colour morphs, whose variations are largely dependant on locality, temperature, and in the case of the central and eastern Bearded Dragons, selective breeding. Bearded Dragons are one of the most collected of the lizards as pets.

Bearded Dragons are lizards that are of moderate size, that have a good temperament and are relatively easy to tame. They are particularly sociable reptiles which interact with one another using a range of body gestures including body tilts, different tail and head postures, head bobs, arm circling, together with other more subtle movements. They will also interact with humans that they have become accustomed to. The signature body language of the Bearded Dragon is the flaring of it's throat or 'beard', used to deter perceived threats and as a display to mature females. When the throat is flared it will also turn black as a further deterrent. In addition to displaying the black beard, they also flatten their body to make themselves look wider, and enhance the effect by gaping their mouths. Much of the body language described above will not be seen in many pet specimens, simply for the fact that the Dragon is unlikely to feel sufficiently threatened. The young may perform a distinctive "wave" as a way of communicating nonaggression. Dragons are inquisitive animals, so create controlled spaces in which it may do some exploring.

Housing



Bearded Dragons are a trusting lizard & considered friendly & a good pet choice.

Dragons do not need much room. A 15 gallon fish tank is fine to start. Once mature, 55 gallon size tank is recommended. All environments must have tight fitting doors or lids. Dragon's are known to be of a curious nature & will escape given the chance.

Your Dragon's environment should include:

- **Substrate:** For substrate (bedding) sand is a good way to go. It allows them to scrape or burrow when the mood strikes them. Reptile carpet, paper towel, or green playground carpet may also be used.
- **Heating:** The temperature in your lizards enclosure should be between 76 - 86 Fahrenheit with 100-110 in a "basking spot". At night the temperature can drop as low as 60 to 65. An under tank heater can be used as the only source of heat by putting it on half the tank You also can use a red light 24/7 for added continual heat.
- **Decoration:** Branches, vines, rocks, etc are good things to have in your enclosure to give your lizard something to climb on & bask on. Hiding boxes are not recommended for young lizards, it may decide to hide instead of bask and therefore will not eat and grow properly.
- **Water:** Bearded dragons require a dry cage, but need to get a lot of water from sprayings and eating fresh vegetables. The hatchlings should be sprayed twice daily on their heads, keeping the spray directed onto their heads as long as they keep lapping up the water. Adults should be sprayed a few times a week.

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Shedding



Bearded dragon's skin is actually reptile scales, not unlike a snake. It does not grow along with the beardie and it must be shed. One clear indicator that your beardie is growing, is a shed. Beardies shed in patches, never the whole body at once. Shedding requires no help from the owner - actually anything you do to help will only hurt your beardie. Never pull any hanging skin that is partially attached - especially near the beardie's eyes - even if it partially obstructs his vision and he fusses with it. Some beardies get cranky during a shed, some reduce their eating. Do not worry, it is all perfectly natural.

Social Behaviour & Breeding

Dragons are not social creatures. Dragons do not get lonely or want to have dragons as 'friends'. When dragons are kept together they think of each other as competition for resources. If you want to own more than one dragon you must make absolutely sure that they are both females. In most cases females of the same size can live together peacefully. Male and female dragons should not be housed together. When a male dragon reaches breeding age he will often harass the female until she is extremely stressed. If the dragons are trapped in the same tank the female will breed once and be done, but the male will want to "play" again and again. Breeding is almost always very violent and involves the male grabbing a big chunk of skin on the back of the female's neck. He will then jerk her violently with that piece of skin until she gets in position. When this happens to a female once or twice her tuff skin protects her, but if it happens repeatedly the male will seriously injure her. He will not let her eat because her quick movements for crickets will trigger a breeding response. He will breed with the female too early if they are raised together. Breeding dragons is very time consuming and is a huge monetary investment. Male dragons should never be allowed to come in contact with each other. They are very quick to fight, and if trapped in a tank, the weaker one could easily be killed.

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