

Bearded Dragon

Scientific Name: Pogona Vitticeps

Native to: Australia

Maximum Length: 15-24 inches

Life Span: 5-10 years

Characteristics:

Bearded Dragons are very docile and make great pets. Their name comes from the spiny scaled area that covers their throat. The male will “puff” up this “beard” as a sign of dominance and defense.

Care tips:

Enclosure: Use a 20-gallon long terrarium for juvenile Bearded Dragons. As the dragons grow, increase the size of the enclosure. Adults need plenty of room to be active. It is recommended that each adult has an area of at least 1.5-2 feet for moving around. Males should never be housed together unless they are in a large enclosure. Males tend to fight, especially in confined spaces.

Substrate: Use a sand substrate for Bearded Dragons. Clean sand every few days by using a cat scooper. Change sand completely every three months or more if needed. Be sure to feed your dragons on a plate or outside the enclosure to make sure they don't eat sand when they are feeding.

Habitat: At one end of tank, use a basking light. The other end should be kept as a cooler area. Use branches and potted non-toxic plants or a hide box in the tank. A rock or log, resting firmly on the bottom of the terrarium, is ideal for the basking area.

Temperature and Lighting: Bearded Dragons are from a hot and dry environment in Australia. The temperatures in their enclosure during the day should be kept around 85° F with a basking area of 100 – 105° F. Night temperature can be as low as 75° F. Bearded Dragons need 10-12 hours of light per day. Use a heat lamp and UVB-emitting bulbs during the day and a low wattage red bulb for night.

Food and Water: Bearded Dragons are omnivores and eat both live food and finely shredded fruits and vegetables. Bearded Dragons eat crickets, mealworms, small roaches, and wax worms. Make sure you dust the crickets with a vitamin and calcium supplement twice a week. Babies should get 1-2-week-old crickets, medium sized dragons should get 2-3-week-old crickets, and large dragons should get 4-5-week-old crickets. As a treat you can feed your Bearded Dragon an occasional pink mouse. Feed your Bearded Dragon every day. Feed your Bearded Dragon a mixture of shredded fruits and vegetables once a day on a plate or a shallow dish. These bite sized vegetables should consist of kale, mustard and collard greens, green beans, squash, carrots, banana, apple, grapes, and melons. Provide a bowl of fresh non-chlorinated or spring water for drinking. Bearded Dragons are desert animals and will not always drink from a water bowl, so misting their fruits and veggies with fresh, non-chlorinated water is the best way to make sure they get enough water