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# BEARDED DRAGON

CARESHEET

## General Information

The Bearded Dragon (*Pogona vitticeps*) originates from central Australia. They can get up to 22 inches long but 15-18 inches is average. They can be found in arid, rocky, desert areas as well as arid woodlands. They are mostly terrestrial but will climb thick shrubbery and small trees. They are diurnal (active during the day.) With proper care, bearded dragons can live 10+ years in captivity.



## Bearded Dragons As Pets

Bearded Dragons are ideal lizards for first time reptile owners and children. Their gentle disposition makes them easy to handle even as babies. They are social in nature and seem to enjoy interaction. Their mature size is large enough to be impressive yet still manageable for the average enthusiast. They are very social lizards and seem to enjoy living in groups. When housing more than one together be sure that there are no significant size differences, as they will not hesitate to pick on or even eat smaller cage mates. Mature males can be aggressive toward other males. We have successfully housed males together without trouble but caution is advised. Providing ample space often helps.

## Housing

A 20 gallon terrarium is adequate for a baby bearded dragon but larger tanks should be considered if you do not want to replace your tank as your dragon grows. Adult bearded require at least a 40 gallon terrarium. The terrarium should be longer than it is tall to offer them plenty of ground space. Logs or some other cage decor should be placed around the basking area to allow them to get closer to the lights, giving them a wider range of temperatures to choose from.

## Quick Reference

Size	15-18 inches
Lifespan	8-12 Years
Hot Spot	120° Basking
Cold Side	70° - 80°
Temperament	Naturally Tame
UVB Needs	Powersun or 10.0 UVB
Diet	Insects and veggies
Origin	Australia
Habitat	Desert
Special Needs	Bearded Dragons need daily feeding and frequent social Interaction to be happy

## Substrate

There are many options in this category. Hatchling bearded dragons should be kept on something that they cannot ingest (tile) or something that can easily pass through their system (Millet, fine coconut husk (dry)). Sand is an ideal substrate for adult bearded dragons. It is easy to clean and the dragons love to dig into it. We recommend some kind of calcium carbonate sand, which is safer for them if ingested. Never use silica sand or untreated dirt that's been brought in from outside. Coconut fiber substrate can be mixed with sand to provide a soil like substrate that is less dusty. Barks, pine, aspen and crushed walnut are not ever recommended. These substrates can lead to impactions and other digestive issues.

## Lighting and Heat

Bearded Dragons need a basking spot that provides them with both UVB and heat. A bearded dragon's basking spot should reach 120° F. The other cooler side of the tank should be around 80°. Having a cool side of the tank is equally important to having a hot basking spot. If you are housing bearded dragons in a small terrarium you may have to reduce your basking temperature so that the entire tank doesn't get too hot. Bearded dragons can tolerate cool nighttime temperatures into the low 70s and do not require nighttime heat unless your house drops below 72° at night. Under tank heaters can be a convenient source for nighttime heat when required. Hot rocks are generally discouraged. There are multiple options to meet UVB requirements. Mercury vapor bulbs such as Zoo Med's Powersun provide excellent UVB as well as heat. There are also high quality 10.0 UVB lights that come in compact or tube form. When using florescent UVB lights you will need a separate lamp to provide heat. For more info visit [www.reptilespecialists.com/caresheets/heatanduvb.html](http://www.reptilespecialists.com/caresheets/heatanduvb.html)

## Feeding and Water

Bearded Dragons are omnivores, which means that they need to be provided with both animal protein and vegetables. Although crickets should be the main source of protein, mealworms, super worms, cockroaches and (optional) pinky mice are all good staples. A variety of darker greens should also be provided. Good options include kale, bok choy, mustard greens, collard greens, turnip greens, cilantro, parsley, and romaine. Vegetables such as squash, carrots, green beans, and peas are good as well. Greens should be served with stems removed and the veggies should be chopped or grated to avoid choking. Fruit should never be more than a small percentage of a dragon's diet. It makes an excellent treat for your dragons but never feed it on a regular basis as most fruits contain too much sugar for a healthy lizard. Wax worms, are also a fun dragon treat. Prey items should be dusted with a high quality calcium supplement. We use supplements with both calcium and D3 every other day for babies and twice a week for adults. Our Dragons are offered salad in the morning and are later offered crickets or other live prey. Most dragons prefer live prey and offering greens first encourages bearded dragons to eat a balanced diet. A shallow water dish should also be provided. Some dragons like to be misted and you will find that if you direct the spray to the top of the head, the water will naturally drip down into the lizard's mouth. Misting baby dragons seems to help ensure that they stay properly hydrated. Soaking young dragons twice a week is another option to help maintain hydration.