



BEARDED DRAGON

Care Guide



ENCLOSURE REQUIREMENTS

Bearded dragons need a fair bit of space. An adult will need at minimum 50gal enclosure size, using both ground space and vertical space by way of climbing decorations and basking perches. Make sure they have enough space to spread out. Have at least one decent sized hiding spot, and plenty of climbing options. They also need access to fresh water. If you are feeding dubia roaches, we recommend a smooth sided dish to feed them in. There are many options for what to cover the enclosure floor with. We use carpet because it is easy to clean, and roaches cant burrow into it. But other people use coconut coir substrate, or even bioactive enclosures. We do not recommend sand because of the risk of impaction.

TEMPERATURE & HUMIDITY

Beardies like it hot. They appreciate a temperature range of about 80-95*f across their enclosure. This can be done by over-enclosure heat fixtures. Using a ceramic heat emitter or non-white heat light is also a good option for 24hr heat. They also need a UVB light during the day. Not all lights have this! Check the packaging carefully! The UVB light is a white light that helps them absorb the calcium provided by "dusting" their food. Make sure to check if your light needs to be replaced regularly, some go "stale" after a few months. Beardies don't need it overly humid, but when they are shedding they may appreciate a lukewarm soak to help get any remaining shed off their toes and the tip of their tail.

BEHAVIOR BASICS

Bearded Dragons are great pets. They are active movers and like checking out their surroundings. They eat insects and will eat a variety of bugs, along with veggies and fruits. They can be housed singly, or in pairs (except male-male, those will fight!), but care should be made to make sure any multi-housed beardies are still getting enough food and one isn't being picked on. They aren't known escape artists, but will make a dash for it if they get nervous. Male beardies especially will posture up and puff out their big beard when they want to show how tough they are. Beardies like to hang out where it is warm, and are known to perch on peoples shoulders and just hang out. They are larger and require more "stuff" and active care, so if you are looking for an easy, low maintenance pet, this may not be the greatest fit, regardless of how cute they are!

HANDLING

When getting your beardie out, grab them around the middle or where their shoulders are. Never from the tail! Secure your hands under them until they have settled, but be prepared for them to scurry if they get startled. Their feet don't have the gripping power of wall climbing lizards, and they can slip on smooth surfaces. You may notice them needing a nail trim if they are scrambling on your bare skin. While they can bite, they don't do it frequently, and will give you warning by puffing up and holding their mouth open. If your beardie seems distressed (mouth open, beard puffed) put it back in its cage for a while to settle. Don't take them outside on chilly days, they need to stay warm!

FEEDING

Beardies love their bugs. Your rescue has primarily been eating dubia roaches and the occasional cricket. Feed them their bugs (well dusted with calcium powder) 2-4x a week. They would like about 12 crickets or 4-6 roaches of the appropriate size at a time. Limit the feeding of mealworms/superworms (too crunchy) or waxworms/hornworms (too fatty) to treats or as availability of the other food sources require. They also like a veggie plate about 2x a week (also dusted with calcium). This should be kept to mostly greens, some veggies, and sparingly fruit. There are many lists online about safe produce, but when in doubt, if it makes people gassy, its not good for reptiles.

HEALTH CONCERNS

Beardies are pretty healthy, and are sturdy once they reach adulthood. Make sure their eyes are clear of stuck shed, and opening fully. Give them a lukewarm bath occasionally to loosen up stuck shed. If you have a baby, make sure to watch for signs of bone deformities (MBD) and make sure their veggies are diced up small.