

Bearded Dragon

Pongona Vitticeps



Bearded Dragons are one of the most popular lizards to have as a pet in the reptile world they are extremely tame from a young age, are great for young children and they have tones of character.

If you have chosen to buy a bearded dragon from a baby we advise to only get one as they cannot be sexed until they are 12-18 months. If you do buy two or more you may find you will need to split them as they grow because if they turn out to be male you will find they will fight and seriously hurt each other when they hit maturity.

If you do want a group we would suggest buying them when they are around 12-18 months and can be sexed.

Description:

Bearded Dragons are a medium sized lizard, with males reaching an average of 40-60cm 16-24inch 1.5ft-2ft in length.

Females are generally smaller reaching between 30-50cm 12-20inch 1-1.5ft.

They will reach adulthood by the age of 2 years you may find watching your bearded dragon grow it will grow its length first then fill out. They have an average life span of 8-10 years some have been known to reach double figures.

These Lizards are impressive to look at with their rough scales and different length of spikes that cover their bodies, with the heaviest concentration on their throat and their longest being behind their ears and down the sides of their bodies. The spines look sharp but are in fact soft to touch.

Bearded Dragons natural colourings range from pale grey's to sandy yellow. Over years of commercial breeding there are now a large variety of colour morphs/ colour phase, which now include white, albino, bright yellows, red and oranges.

Housing and Lighting:

We recommend keeping them in a wooden vivarium as these keep their environment at the correct temperatures, for one bearded dragon a minimum of a 3ftx2ftx2ft or for two/three bearded dragons a 4ftx2ftx2ft is a suitable size (LengthxHeightxWidth). You will need a UV tube of 12%, which runs most of the length of the vivarium. The U.V bulb should be changed every 6-8 months as the D3 runs out. Although the bulb light may still work it still need to be changed. You should keep your lighting on a 12 hour day the best way to do this is by a timer the starter unit plugs into.

Heating:

Your vivarium should have a hot end and a cooler end this is because your bearded dragon is cold blooded like all reptiles and needs to regulate its body temperature by moving from one end to the other. You will need to place your heat sources at one end of your vivarium to achieve this. The heating should be provided from above via a spot bulb normally a 100w and a 150w ceramic heater or 500w AHS heater. The spot bulb should be kept on a timer like the U.V to help stimulate a 12 hour day. If you're using a ceramic bulb you will need to plug it into a thermostat we recommend using a Habistat as this is one of the best brands on the market, if you are using an AHS heater this will have a thermostat built in. Place the probes at the cool end of the vivarium and set to 80F.

Bearded dragons come from most parts of Australia so require temperatures reaching highs of 95-100F at the hot end and 80-85F at the cooler end during the day and dropping down to 75F overnight (your ceramic or AHS heater will maintain the night time temperatures). Please remember **DO NOT** place the vivarium directly in front of a window or next to a radiator as the unfiltered sunlight/extra heat being projected through the glass will raise the temperatures significantly and could be fatal.

Substrate and Décor:

Ok so you should use a light/dry substrate these are a few that would be suitable hemp, corn cob or the most popular beach chips. Try and avoid substrates like sand as this can cause IMPACTION

Don't use a dark substrate like peat or dark bark chippings as they will make the vivarium too humid

As bearded dragons are diurnal (awake during the day asleep at night) they like to be out basking and running around so it is important that you put branches, cork bark or rocks around the vivarium, at night they may hide under rocks or cork bark for shelter it is also a good if they want some quite time to hide away during the day.

However if they are hiding a lot during the day then this could be a sign of stress or ill health.

Try and stay away from using fake silk or plastic plants as this can sometime be mistaken for food and the bearded dragon will be unable to digest the food. If you feel you would like to add colour to your vivarium you can always use a backing most pet shops will have this available and will be able to cut it down to your required size.

Feeding:

Live food

Live food should be offered to baby bearded dragons on a daily basis with a small bowl of fruit and veg. Once the reach adult hood bearded dragons need to be feed a differently.

Here is a guide to help you.

0-3 Months - Live foods should be offered 7 days a week and veg 1-2 times a week.

3-6 Months - Live foods should be offered 6 days and week and veg 2-3 times a week.

6-8 Months - Live food should be offered 5 days a week and veg 3-4 times a week.

8-12 months - Live foods should be offered 4 days a week and veg 4-5 times a week.

12-18 months - Live food should be offered 3 days a week and veg 5-6 times a week.

18 months plus - Live foods should be offered 2-3 days a week and veg 6-7 times a week.

Live foods may include:

- Crickets
- Hoppers
- Locusts
- Meal worms
- Wax worms

Some good fruits and vegetables to feed:

- Apricot
- asparagus
- bell pepper (red green or yellow)
- blueberries
- cabbage
- cherries
- Spring greens
- Dandelion leaves and flower

- Grapes
- curly kale
- melon
- peaches
- pears
- plums
- butternut Squash,
- strawberries
- watercress

What NOT to feed:

- Iceberg lettuce and cucumber as this contains a lot of water and no nurturance.
- Spinach as this will bond with the calcium so the bearded dragon cant digest it and will start to become calcium deficient.

Supplements:

You will need to dust the food on a daily basis with a calcium or multi-vitamin supplement this normally comes in a powder form we recommend using Pro-Rep Calci Powder (as Calcium) and Nutrobal (multi-vitamins). This will help your bearded dragon grow up properly and healthily

Dust the food with Calcium

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday and Sunday

Dust the food with multivitamins

Wednesday and Saturday.

Gut loading

you should always gut load your live food before offering them to your bearded dragon, otherwise you are basically feeding them an empty shell. You can either buy 'gut load' from the Internet or pet shop. Place this in with the prey, or dust some veg with vitamins. Leave for a few hours, to make sure all the prey have eaten some of the veg. By feeding the 'food' you also increase how long they live for.