



Bearded Dragon Care Sheet

Bearded Dragons are considered advanced reptiles due to their very specific environment requirements and incredible appetite. They are quite intelligent, active, tolerant of handling and have loads of personality.

- **Adult Size:** Average is around 18" but depending on their genetics could be a bit bigger or smaller.
- **Life Expectancy:** 12-15 years.
- **Tank Size:** If it is going to be handled frequently an enclosure 36x18x18 would be the smallest it could live in. These lizards require lots of physical and mental stimulation so if they are getting that outside of their enclosure they can live in the above mentioned size, but if you are not going to be handling often a larger enclosure is recommended.
- **Lighting:** Being desert animals they require heat and UV to live a happy healthy life. They are very UV dependant and require a good quality source, if insufficient lighting is offered they will develop debilitating and life threatening ailments. One of the services we provide is UV testing to ensure that the bulb you are using is offering the recommended amount. UV can be offered through compact fluorescent bulbs, fluorescent, and mercury vapor bulbs and not all brands of the same style of bulb are the same as there are drastically different output levels. We recommend Mega Ray brand mercury vapor bulbs as they produce the highest quantity of UV and are the most cost efficient way of providing light, heat and UV all in one bulb. Red colored heat lamps are not recommended as they can irritate the eyes of the bearded. It is recommended to use a lamp arm bracket to suspend your lighting above the tank so you can raise or lower the fixture to reach your appropriate temp range.
- **Temperature/Humidity:** During the day the basking temperature should reach 105°F. You will need to decorate the enclosure so that the bearded can get up to this temperature and then enough space so it can cool down if needed. Night time the whole tank should cool down to around 70°F. If your house gets cooler than this then you will need to provide a heating element to bring it up to this temp. Humidity ideally around 30-35% is good for these guys and generally there is no need to adjust the enclosure for this. Alberta normally sits close to this.
- **Bathing:** Bearded will sometimes need a bath if they need assistance shedding, if they are constipated (a warm bat and gentle massage on the belly will help move things along), or dirty. We recommend to use a rubbermaid container filled with lukewarm water deep enough so when the bearded is standing its head is easily out of the water.
- **Basic enclosure set up:** You will need to set up the basking area on one side of the

tank so there is a warm and cool side. Generally the basking area is an elevated platform on the warm side for the lizard to sit on with some sort of ramp or décor that it can easily climb on to get on and off the platform. There will need to be tight fitting lid on the tank and be aware of any plastic molding that could be potentially melted from the heat/light that will be suspended above the tank. For baby and juvenile bearded dragons reptile carpet is recommended for the bottom of the enclosure, it is easy to clean and there is no way that it can be eaten or cause digestive issues. On the cool side of the tank a small water and food dish that is heavy enough to not be tipped over is needed. Some sort of hide is recommended to go under the basking platform so if the lizard wants to hide it can.

- **Feeding** Bearded Dragons are omnivores and require a wide variety of foods. Baby/juveniles should be fed a diet of 80% animal protein (generally insects like crickets and worms) and then 20% leafy greens. As they develop into adults this will reverse so that 20% will be the animal protein and 80% will be the leafy greens. The more variety you offer this animal as a baby the less picky it will be as an adult and generally will be healthier because of the assortment of vitamins it will be getting. Crickets are used for the main animal protein source and the healthier the crickets are in turn the healthier the Bearded Dragon will be. During the developmental stages of this lizard's life they will be eating hundreds of insects a week so there will need to be an effort in housing and caring for these bugs too. Feeding the live insects to your bearded dragon should never be done in their enclosure, if any of these happen to hide and are not eaten right away they may later come out of hiding and start to chew on the lizard when it is sleeping causing major damage which can cause infection, necrosis or even death. Always use a feeding bin like a large rubbermaid to feed your Bearded Dragon in, and there should be a high contrast in color between the insects and the container so that they are easily spotted and consumed. Feed the Bearded Dragon as many insects lightly dusted with vitamins as it will eat in about 15-20 mins then put any remaining insects back into their container and the bearded dragon back into its enclosure. Baby/juvenile Bearded Dragons should be fed Every day the Bearded Dragon should also be offered a helping of bite sized leafy greens or commercial diets. Most customers will come once a week to purchase the insects required and it is a good idea to get an assortment of worms to also offer as the animal protein. Some healthy veggie options are mustard greens, shredded carrots, dandelion greens, bok choy, arugula, romaine or red leaf lettuce, collard greens, cilantro, and parsley. With the veggie options it is also really important to offer different things all the time.
- **Water:** Most bearded dragons won't drink from a still dish of water, so offering a water source that is moving will encourage them to drink. There are bubbling dishes and waterfalls available that work well for this. You can also use a syringe or pipette to drip water onto the lips of the Bearded Dragon to get it to drink once or twice a week.
- **Maintenance:** Daily check to see if their water source needs to be cleaned, remove any feces, remove any shed, feed the appropriate food, feed and clean crickets. Ensure that the UV source is changed when needed and check temperatures regularly if your house temp fluctuates depending on the time of year.