



SO YOU WANT A BEARDED DRAGON?

Here is a simple beginner startup guide for enclosures, substrate, supplies and food with a printable checklist inside.

WHAT IS INCLUDED:

- ✓ Enclosure recommendations
- ✓ Lighting recommendations
- ✓ Temperature recommendations
- ✓ Diet & Supplement recommendations
- ✓ Substrate recommendations



1ST- Do not buy the pre packaged reptile kits

WHY NOT?

These kits contains several items you don't need, and lacks several items you do need. Let's go over them.

What is usually included?



40 gallon tank

Depending on your budget, I suggest starting with a 120 gallon tank (minimum size recommendation for adult dragons)



Dual dome lamp fixture

This item is unnecessary when purchasing proper UVB



Compact fluorescent UVB

This item is not sufficient for a bearded dragon's UVB needs



Spot lamp

This can be used, and is an acceptable option. 100-150 watt depending on size of enclosure & distance from basking spot



Dual thermometer and humidity gauge

You will need a thermometer and humidity gauge, but digital is best



Food and storage bowl

These food bowls are fine, but easy for bugs to escape. Could be better used for water

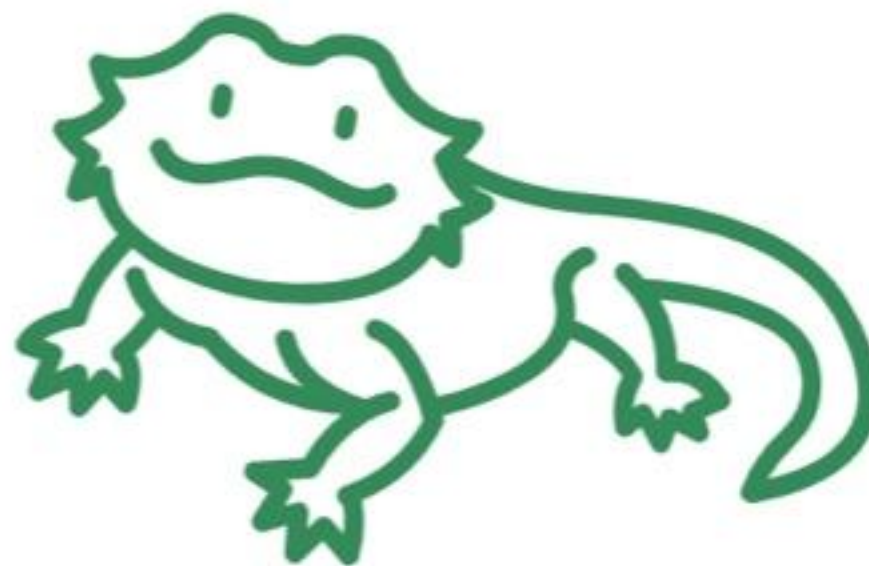
Reptile sand

Safer substrate options are listed in more detail on the substrate section



Bearded Dragon Starter Checklist

- ☐ Enclosure. Minimum 40 gallon for babies or 120 gallon for adults
- ☐ Basking bulb with a dome
- ☐ Arcadia pro T 5 UVB kit 12% or Reptisun T5 HO 10.0 UVB kit with hood
- ☐ Digital thermometer and humidity gauge
- ☐ Branches for enrichment
- ☐ Hot side hide with flat basking spot
- ☐ Cool side hide
- ☐ Substrate
- ☐ Escape proof feeding bowl
- ☐ Calcium powder (with and without vitamin D3) and multivitamin
- ☐ Feeding tweezers
- ☐ Bugs!



ENCLOSURE

Enclosures can range in various sizes. I recommend starting with a 120 gallon, but a 40 gallon will temporarily work for a baby beardie.



[New Age Pets Ecoflex](#)



[ZenHabitats.com](#)



[ReptiZoo](#)



[Dubia.com](#)

HEATING

Bearded dragons require a combination of heat and UV. Let's go over heat first. You can choose a basking bulb from several brands. You can find a light dome much cheaper at a hardware store. Basking bulbs will be 75-150 watt depending on size of enclosure.



UV

Proper ultraviolet light is imperative for proper development of your new bearded dragon. These are the current best options. They are found on multiple sites, and pet stores. This is not something you want to skimp on budget or availability.

Best practice is to place UV inside tank and cover 1/2 - 3/4 of the length of the tank. Heat bulb and UV go on the same side



Arcadia Pro T5 high output 12%



ZooMed Reptisun T5 high output 10.0

Digital Thermometer

General heat recommendations are 40 to 42°C or 104 to 107°F on the hot side, and an basking surface area temperature of 42 to 45°C or 108 to 113°F And 22 to 25°C or 71 to 77°F on the cool side.

Digital thermometers are much more reliable, along with a temperature gun. Humidity should range between 30-60%



Branches

Bearded dragons need branches for climbing and enrichment. You can order them online, purchase in a store or gather a safe wood branch from outside. If you do this, make sure to soak it and then bake at 250° for 20 minutes.



Hides and Basking spot

Bearded dragons need a flat basking spot that absorbs heat, we prefer slate. This is something you can purchase or use slate found outside. To clean use 1/10 ammonia to water and soak, then let dry. Dragons also need a hide on both sides of their tank. Many owners build their basking spot hide with bricks and a slate cheese board.



Substrate

Substrate can be very controversial in the bearded dragon community. I recommend doing research on this, and making the best decision for yourself. I will only leave a couple of recommendations to use and not to use.

Safe Loose substrates



Australian desert sand
Exo Terra desert sand
Or DIY 40/40/20 mix of fine sand, organic top soil & excavator clay

Safe solid substrates



Tile



Newspaper



Paper Towels

Unsafe substrates



Ground walnut shells



Reptile carpet



Calcium sand

Feeding

I recommend getting an escape proof feeding bowl for your bugs, tweezers, calcium and bugs!



Calcium is so important for a bearded dragon to properly develop. I recommend getting with and without D3 only offer D3 2x a week & multivitamin 1x a week

Ceramic bowls with a lip around the inside help prevent bugs from escaping



Tweezers for handling bugs

Live bugs

Never feed packaged beardie food

(more food options next page)



Another fun, enriching option
[Linked here](#)



Safe food staples



Greens

Mustard greens
Collard greens
Turnip greens
Dandelion greens
Escarole
Arugula
Endive
Watercress

Bugs

Dubia roaches
Discoïd roaches
Black Soldier
fly larvae
Black soldier flies
Crickets
Silkworms

How often and how much do you feed?

Babies (30 grams and under)- 5-6 appropriate sized feeders a day + daily salad

Juveniles (30 grams and over)- 5-6 appropriate sized feeders every other day + daily salad

Adults- 5-7 appropriate sized feeders 2x a week + daily salad