

Rankins Dragon Care Sheet

Temperature	Humidity	Enclosure	Substrate	Lifespan	Size
95-105° basking side 84-89° cool side UVB all sides	35% - 40%	10gal. - 20gal. (young) 40gal. - 75gal. (adult)	Sand, walnut shells, wood chips, paper towel, reptile carpet	8-10 years	8"-12"

Major Diet	Minor Diet
crickets, roaches, mealworms, superworms (dusted with D3 calcium), acorn squash, butternut squash, collard greens, endive, mustard greens, spaghetti squash, turnip greens, yellow squash, prickly pears	waxworms, horn worms, mice, artichoke heart, asparagus, bell peppers, bok choy, carrots, chicory, cucumber, lentils, kale, kohlrabi, okra, parsnips, pumpkin, yams, zucchini, coriander, apples, blackberries, blueberries, grapes, mango, pear, strawberries

Rankins dragon (*Pogona henrylawsoni*)

The Rankins Dragon (also known as the dumpy dragon, Lawson's dragon, black soil dragon, or dwarf bearded dragon) is native to Queensland in northeast Australia. They are considerably smaller than the closely related bearded dragon, only reaching an average size of 8" (20cm) to 12" (30 cm), including tail. For those who want to own a beardie but don't have the space requirements, the Rankins dragon could be the one for you.

Housing

Generally a Rankins dragon requires a smaller vivarium than a bearded dragon as an adult. I would recommend 30" (20 gallon) as the size for one adult although 36" (30 gallon breeder) would be better for more dragons. Very young Rankins dragon can at least look a bit lost in a larger vivarium and some seem to get a bit nervous, hiding a lot, sometimes to the point of not getting enough UV light. Starting off in a smaller house is definitely alright, although by no means essential.

If you wish to keep more than a single Rankins dragon (and they seem to be more sociable than beardies) then ensure you only have one male, with a couple of females. Obviously you will need a bigger enclosure. If you wish to have more than one male Rankins dragon a much larger space is required and it is not recommended.

The vivarium needs to have a sufficient length to allow for the creation of a temperature

gradient. The enclosure needs to be intensely hot at one end but have enough distance for the temperature to drop at the cool end.

Dragon Lighting and Temperature

Rankins Dragons are desert reptiles. Animals that actively bask in hot climates naturally receive a high dose of UVB from the sun. A basking site of about 100-110 degrees Fahrenheit works well for them. The basking site can be provided by a spotlight (such as a mercury vapor bulb) positioned over a rock, branch, etc. at one end of the enclosure. Keeping the spotlight at one end of the cage will allow your dragon to thermoregulate (move between a cooler end of the enclosure and the hotter end with the basking area). The cooler end of the enclosure can be kept at about 85 degrees. Basking bulbs should be on for 10-12 hours per day.

In addition to the basking spotlight, provide full-spectrum UVB (ultraviolet) lighting over the rest of the enclosure. This lighting is critically important for dragons that are kept indoors, as it assists them in synthesizing vitamin D3, which aids in calcium absorption. There are many types of lights available; consult with store employees and read the packaging to determine the best for your setup.

Heat can also be provided using heat tape, heat emitters and other devices available in pet stores. Keep a thermometer in the enclosure to track the cage temperature. At night, it can go down to about 65 degrees.

Rankins Dragon Substrate

Sand is commonly used with Rankins dragons, though there is concern, especially when keeping young lizards, that intestinal impaction could result if they accidentally eat some. It is not recommended that you keep young dragons on sand, or any kind of loose substrate. Newspaper, paper towel or reptile carpet (though watch for loose threads or areas that can snag dragon toenails) would be better choices.

Adult Rankins can be kept on these same substrates. If you must use sand, playground sand (available at hardware and do-it-yourself stores) is a decent choice due to the fact that it's not as dusty as other types of sand. Sand mixed with clean soil that has not been treated with any fertilizers, pesticides, etc., can also be used with adult dragons. Coarse beech wood chips is also another good alternative.

If you keep your dragons on sand, reduce the risk of impaction by offering food on a shallow dish rather than placing it directly on the substrate.

While Rankins are not an arboreal lizard, they do like to climb on top of things to survey their surroundings. The vivarium should be decorated with various pieces of wood or rock to enable them to do this.

Dragon Food

Rankin dragons are omnivorous, meaning they eat both animal and plant matter. Insects, such as crickets, dubia roaches and mealworms, should be dusted with a vitamin/mineral supplement and calcium. Dusting can be achieved by placing the insects in a plastic bag with

some of the powder, and shaking the bag to lightly coat the insects prior to offering them to your lizards.

It isn't recommended to use mealworms daily due to the higher level of chitin in the jaws and the consequent increased risk of impaction. An occasional mealworm would be fine. Also avoid broccoli and cabbage leaves with a Rankins dragon as these contain oxylates that can prevent calcium being available to the metabolism.

Also offer dragons finely chopped veggies (such as squash, zucchini, carrots, etc.), greens (collard, mustard, dandelion, etc.) and fruit (blackberries, blueberries, apples, etc.). Use healthy, vitamin-rich items. You can sprinkle the appropriate amount of powdered supplements on these foods. Avoid iceberg lettuce because it is not nutritious.

Again, if you keep your dragons on sand, offer food on a shallow dish rather than placing it directly on the substrate.

Water For Your Rankins Dragon

Mist dragons using a water spray bottle; they'll lick water droplets off cage walls, rocks, etc., as well as themselves. Don't overdo it; you don't want their enclosure to get too wet and become humid. Offer water in a dish that is large enough for them to soak. Be sure to keep this dish and the water in it clean. Rankins dragons can also be bathed weekly in shallow luke warm water for 10 minutes.

Breeding of Rankins Dragon

If you keep a male and female together, they may breed. You do not need to do anything to encourage this, providing they are healthy and the conditions are good, it will happen naturally. You need to consider whether you want this to happen.

A gravid female should have access to a nesting box to lay her eggs. The box should be large enough that she can fully turn-around inside it. You can use a soil mix in there that is wet enough to clump but no more.

The eggs should be incubated in an incubator at 84°. You can incubate your eggs in sealed boxes on a moisture rich substrate (such as Hatchrite) to trap the humidity around the eggs. After approximately 60 days the eggs will start to hatch, the first babies to emerge will encourage the rest of the eggs to hatch.