

Preparing For Your New Bearded Dragon's Arrival Home

It is best to have everything set up prior to your bearded dragon coming home. These simple steps will help you get ready for your little one's arrival and provide a smooth transition. This will help minimise stress for you and your bearded dragon.

ENCLOSURE

If you are purchasing an enclosure that is second-hand, we recommend F10 disinfectant. F10 is a veterinary grade disinfectant suitable for cleaning reptile enclosures and items such as hammocks, hides, bowls, and utensils. This will help protect your little one from any harmful bacteria and viruses. Alternatively, you can use a steam cleaner on the highest heat setting.

An adult dragon requires no less than a 4ft enclosure space. Keep this in mind when purchasing your first enclosure. It is particularly important to have your enclosure set up and ready to go a few days prior to collection. A few suggestions to consider are:

- Hides
- Bowls
- Substrate
- Hammocks
- Backgrounds
- Basking rocks & branches

The lights, heating and thermostat should be running and in order. Keep a consistent check on your temperatures and humidity levels until they have stabilised and have regulated.

COHAB ADVICE

We advise against cohabitation.

Bearded dragons are solitary animals and naturally prefer their own space. Cohabitation can often lead to unwanted competitive behaviours for heat, light and food. This will often lead to malnutrition, illness, injury and sometimes death. If you want to keep more than one bearded dragon, please provide them with their own enclosure. It is your responsibility as a registered owner to keep your dragons safe.

TEMPERATURES

Temperatures in the hot end should average around 38 - 43°C, in the cool end between 28 - 32°C, with a basking spot area resting around 40°C. At night turn all your lights and heat off and let your dragon sleep naturally. It is also important to

note, bearded dragons will not digest their food in an efficient manner in temps below 36°C.

We use:

- Super Reptile basking light 100w
 - UV Tube T5/coil 26w reptile rated 10.0
 - Ceramic heat emitter 100w (CHE)
 - Dimming timer thermostat
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- For babies we aim for 14 hours of heat and UV on during the day and 10 hours off during the night.
 - For adults 1 year+ we aim for 12 hours of heat and UV on during the day and 12 hours off during the night.
 - CHE is set to turn on when temps drop below 15 degrees.

We do not recommend the use of a red light for your bearded dragon enclosure. Red lights can damage your dragon's eyesight and third eye interaction. Red lights can also interfere with sleep cycle and can cause loss of appetite, stress and compromise to the dragon's immune system. Please don't let anyone persuade you differently.

Each of these steps will ensure that everything is in working order and temperatures are stable. If there are any issues you will have ample time to correct the problem. Providing an appropriate and stable environment before arriving home will minimise stress and will make way for an easy, well-adjusted transition. This will undoubtedly help in avoiding any concerns with feeding complications and behavioural issues.

SUBSTRATE

There are many different substrate choices on the market, some raising cause for concern with impaction. Here at Joshie's Dragons, our babies go from paper towel to sand substrate. We choose Bunning's play sand as our preferred choice of substrate as it is close to nature, easier to keep clean and affordable to replace.

HANDLING

For the first week try not to handle your baby too much. It's a good idea to allow some time for your dragon to get to know your presence, voice and scent before regular handling. It can take around 2 weeks for your bearded dragon to settle in. Giving your baby time to settle in will help prevent complications. Always remain calm, be gentle and approach your dragon using steady movements.

Begin with handling your baby within the enclosure and then move on to handling outside of the enclosure. Try for 15 minutes each day and increase the time as he

or she becomes more comfortable with you. Bearded dragons are more receptive towards handling in the afternoon so it's a good idea to set a routine of handling around this time.

HYDRATION

We offer water three times a day. This is done via drops of water onto your dragon's nose until they stop lapping/drinking. We place shallow water bowls on the cool side of the enclosure to prevent humidity and to avoid respiratory issues. A light misting outside of the enclosure can be offered. You can also aid hydration levels by misting down salads prior to serving.

During the warmer months we offer our dragons a weekly soak in the tub for around 15 to 30 minutes. All my dragons enjoy bath time for various reasons. I own one dragon who will only drink when being bathed, another who uses bath time to empty her bowels and they all enjoy a good swim. Bath time is extremely useful to assist bodily functions, activity and exercise.

Bath water temperatures need to be lukewarm as you would run for a baby: **30 - 35degrees Celsius**. If the water is too hot you will scold your dragon and if it's too cold their body can begin to shut down.

Please mind the depth of the water. The bath should be filled so it just reaches baby's belly and not above the back. I use a small tub to bath babies and gradually move up to bigger tubs as they grow. Please do not use any soaps or chemicals in the bath just clean fresh water. You can use a soft toothbrush to assist in cleaning and shedding. Always provide constant supervision over your dragon throughout the bathing process.

SALADS, VEGETABLES, FRUITS & GREENS

A baby bearded dragon requires a ratio of 20% salads and 80% protein. Whereas an adult bearded dragon's diet requires around 80% salads and 20% protein. It is important to note that bearded dragons require food no bigger than the gap between their eyes. Feeding your dragon insects and salads that are too large can cause impaction and further complications.

To avoid any nasties always remember to wash salads and fruits prior to feeding. If you are harvesting your own plants for feeding, please be sure they come from a pesticide free garden. Always remove any peel, seeds and stems. All hard veggies and root vegetables should be finely grated.

We feed salads every morning and leave some within the enclosure for grazing throughout the day. Cut all food into small manageable pieces. Salads can be sprayed down with water to aid hydration.

As a guide aim to:

- Offer leafy greens as a staple each day.
- Add different coloured veggies to boost health and encourage fussy eaters.
- Include grated hard veggies to support healthy teeth and gums.
- Provide 4-5 different salads/veggies each serving.
- Limit fruit to once a month as a prevention to mouth rot and tooth decay.
- Engage in personal research prior to introducing a new plant to your dragon to ensure safe dietary requirements and exclusions.

Start off by offering a small spoonful of salad and increase as required. We offer a variety of leafy greens such as endive, rocket, bok choy, oak, butter and coral lettuce. We add finely grated pumpkin, sweet potato or carrot once a week to assist in healthy teeth and gums. If all the salad is consumed in one sitting, we offer some more. Leafy greens and variety are key to a healthy dragon diet.

The following fruits and salads contain oxalates which bind calcium and require limiting in your dragon's diet:

- Strawberries
- Raspberries
- Blueberries
- Beet greens
- Spinach
- Kale

The following produce are toxic or unhealthy and should be eliminated altogether:

- Avocado
- Iceberg lettuce
- Eggplant
- Beetroot tops
- Rhubarb
- Onions
- Leeks
- Chives
- Garlic
- Mushrooms
- Tomato
- Citrus fruit

It is good practice to research any plant matter before adding it to your bearded dragon's diet.

Please find a list of beardie safe salads, veggies, flowers and fruits in our file section.

PROTEIN/LIVE INSECT FEEDERS

Source and purchase your bearded dragon's staple feeder insects prior to collection day. We do not feed your dragon on the day of collection. The reason being is to prevent any cause for travel sickness, vomiting and defecation during travel. Due to this your dragon may be hungry and will require feeding during their first day home. Please do not stress if your dragon will not eat at first. It is a big day coming home to new people and an unfamiliar environment, so often the best approach is observation and time to adjust.

I train all my dragons to consume insects in a large feeding container to help avoid substrate consumption and impaction. This also helps to prevent any chance of enclosure infestation and the chance of insects biting and feeding off your dragon's skin. The only insects I feed within the enclosure are black soldier fly larvae.

Again, it is important to note that bearded dragons require food no bigger than the gap between their eyes. Feeding your dragon insects and salads that are too large can cause impaction and further complications. Babies are fed live insects twice per day. Offer around 10 to 15 insects at a time and allow your dragon around 15 minutes for each feeding session. If all the insects are consumed offer some more.

We recommend and use black soldier fly larvae as a healthy staple protein. We also include secondary staples such as small woodies and crickets. It is important to dust your insects with calcium powder prior to feeding, please follow recommended dosage instructions. Black soldier fly larvae have a high calcium content and therefore do not require any dusting.

We only offer mealworms to our adult dragons and only as a rare treat. Mealworms are high in fat and have a hard exoskeleton which makes them difficult to digest.

You can purchase live feeder insects through:

- ***Joshie's Dragons (we stock live BSFL - Black Soldier Fly Larvae only)***
- Online order through reputable suppliers
- All good reptile and pet stores

We highly recommend Brian's Worms QLD as an online wood roach supplier. Brian's contact details are as follows:

- Brian's Worms QLD
 - admin@briansworms.com
 - www.briansworms.com

Please keep in mind when ordering insects online:

- They can often take a few days to arrive.

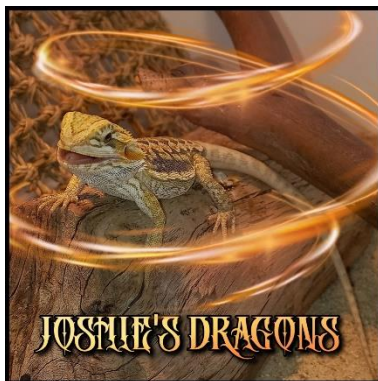
- Some online suppliers only dispatch on designated days.
- Allow ample time to have your order placed and delivered.

DIGESTION

As previously mentioned, bearded dragons need a temperature of 36 °C to assist with healthy digestion. Try and keep a routine of feeding your dragon in the morning roughly 2 hours after their lights come on and then in the evening no less than 2 hours prior to lights off. These steps will help ensure healthy digestion for your dragon. Again, it is important to remember the size of the food to avoid impaction.

CONGRATULATIONS ON MAKING IT THROUGH THE BEARDIE ADOPTION 101 DOCUMENT!!!

Finally, if you are feeling overwhelmed, please do not hesitate in contacting us either by phone, email, messenger or by raising any concerns with our group admin on Facebook. Your baby's happiness and health are important to us too and we are glad to offer advice and/or troubleshoot solutions with you. We hope you enjoy your new dragon and thank you so much for choosing Joshie's Dragons.



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