

BRUMATION & WHY IT IS NOT RECOMMENDED FOR A BABY BEARDED DRAGON'S FIRST WINTER

In the cooler months adult bearded dragons go through a process known as brumation. Brumation for cold blooded animals is very much the equivalent to hibernation for warm blooded animals.

Leading into the cooler months and throughout winter your bearded dragon will begin to slow down and become less active. The dragon's body temperature will drop, and their heart and respiratory rate will lower. The dragon will then retreat for the winter and go through an extended period without food. This is known as brumation.

However, during a baby's first winter the brumation process is not helpful. Allowing a baby bearded dragon to brumate before the age of one can be quite harmful.

Let's discuss why...

A baby's body requires a constant source of nutrition to grow in a healthy manner. If a baby bearded dragon were to brumate and cease daily feeds the baby would become underdeveloped and malnourished. Another important aspect to consider is the provision of calcium, warmth, and exposure to UV light. If any of these elements were no longer available, the baby would fall at risk to metabolic bone disease and other illnesses.

During your baby's first winter they will require:

- Food
- Hydration
- Supplementation
- UV lighting
- Heating
- Activities
- Snuggles

What you have provided for your baby throughout the warmer months will remain the same throughout your baby's first winter. Nothing much changes in a dragon's first year in the way of routine.

If you happen to notice behaviours in your baby which suggest they are attempting to brumate you will need to intervene.

These behaviours will often display as:

- Sleepiness
- Decrease activity
- Earlier bedtime
- Little interest in food
- An attempt to burrow down or hide

The best way to approach these behaviours is to maintain everything you have learned thus far by way of feeding and supplementation, hydration and maintaining lights and heating. You can also distract any attempt at baby slowing down by increasing daily handling time and providing outdoor activities in the sunshine.

On a final note, please avoid the use of electric heat mats, heat rocks and any type of close contact heating. We do not recommend these type of heating devices for bearded dragons as they can be harmful. Keeping baby awake throughout winter is particularly important so please offer them the best start they deserve. If you have any questions please get in touch!

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