

# Bearded Dragons

***Pogona barbata*, *Pogona vitticeps*, *Pogona henrylawsoni***

**FACT  
SHEET**

## Introduction and Origin

The most common species in the pet industry are the Eastern Bearded Dragon (*Pogona barbata*), the Pygmy Bearded Dragon (*P. henrylawsoni*) and the Central Bearded Dragon (*Pogona vitticeps*) - also known as the 'Centralian'. Eastern Bearded Dragons grow up to 30cm and are distributed the length of the eastern quarter of Australia, Eastern Bearded dragons are common in open forests, heathland, scrub and even some disturbed areas such as farmland. The Central Bearded Dragon grows to 30cm and lives in the arid woodlands and deserts of central Australia. Pygmy Bearded Dragons, *Pogona henrylawsoni*, are native to

**Bearded Dragons have 3 eyes! The third "eye" being on top of their head and it helps with their circadian rhythm.**

the Black Soil plains in Central Queensland. Pygmy Bearded Dragons grow to 15cm and do not feature a beard such as

the Central Bearded Dragon (*Pogona vitticeps*) but have the similar passive nature of its larger cousin.

If you are considering a Bearded Dragon as a pet, although they are easy to keep, it is essential to provide them with the correct environment to ensure their well-being and to maximise the years of pleasure they will provide you. In captivity, bearded dragons can live 7-10 years with proper care.

## Characteristics

The Bearded Dragon is tan to yellow in color. It is called "bearded" because of the dragon's ability to flare out the skin in the throat region when it is threatened or territorial. Its body has a flattened appearance, which becomes even more pronounced if the dragon is alarmed. There are spines on the throat, sides of the head, and sides of the body. The head is wedge-shaped, and the Bearded Dragon has a tail that is almost as long as the body.

It is difficult to distinguish males from females among hatchlings and juveniles. When they become adults, sexual differences become more apparent. The males generally have larger heads and larger, darker beards.



## Behaviour

Bearded Dragons tend to be mellow and docile, even in the wild. Although hatchlings and juveniles may be skittish, the adults will often appear to enjoy human company, making Bearded Dragons one of the better reptilian pets. Bearded Dragons tend to be curious, and will enjoy exploring, so if you can, provide a safe, larger enclosure.

To pick up a Bearded Dragon, place your hand under its abdomen and gently scoop it up. As the dragon lays on your palm, gently curve your fingers around its abdomen.

## Licensing

Bearded Dragons in New South Wales are required to be kept under a reptile keeper's licence. The licence is easily obtainable by phoning National Parks and Wildlife on (02) 9585-6406 or by picking up an application form from Kellyville Pets. It is presently law in New South Wales to have a licence, without it, it is impossible to gain a reptile legally.

## Diet and Water

Adult Bearded Dragons will eat crickets, cockroaches and a daily variety of freshly chopped green leafy vegetables (except for normal lettuce).



# Bearded Dragons

Crickets should be fed in the morning, so they have some to nibble on throughout the day. Crickets should not be any larger than 1/3 of the size of the lizards head. Oversize insects can cause blockage and can be fatal. Meal Worms should not be fed to young lizards, as they are hard to digest.

It is recommended you give your lizards vitamins and calcium once or twice a week.

It is important to provide your animal with a fresh daily supply of water. Water containers should be preferably made from glazed terracotta or stoneware to prevent them tipping over and for ease of cleaning. Also they should not be deep as they often like to bath, especially when they are shedding. Place the water container at the cool end of the enclosure. Occasionally spray a fine mist of water over the dragons. Apart from then absolutely loving it, it also will help them shed.

**Learn more  
from the team  
at Kellyville Pets**

## Housing

A 1.3 metre long cabinet is suitable for a trio of either the central or eastern bearded dragons or up to six of the pygmy dragons. It is ideal to not mix species, though not imperative.

Housing Pygmy Bearded Dragons is relatively easy due to their small size compared to other bearded dragons. A single Pygmy dragon can be comfortably kept in a 600 x 400 mm enclosure, where a pair or trio can be kept in a 900 to 1200 x 500 mm enclosure.

The enclosure can be glass or timber (with glass front), remembering that timber will retain heat better than glass. Glass enclosures are great where they are kept in a home that does not get too hot or cold throughout the year. If you use timber you should ensure that it is properly painted to allow you to clean it easily. There are several different types of substrates available. Desert Sand is an excellent substrate for displaying your animal while pelletised recycled paper is a low maintenance option.

## Heating

Dragons require a basking type heat. A day lamp should be provided at one end of the enclosure. The temperature directly under the lamp can be approx 40°C. On the opposite side it should only be approx 25°C and approx 30°C in the centre of the enclosure. A night lamp should be provided to

maintain the ambient or average temp around 18°C. It is highly recommended that you fit a thermostat to your heat lamps to prevent cooking your animals on hot days and to maintain the above temp.

## Lighting

It is important to provide both UVA and UVB on a daily basis to your reptile. It is essential for absorption of calcium and digestion. The easiest way is to provide UV is through an artificial source. UV tubes are available that will provide both UVA and UVB and will fit onto an aquarium reflector. For automation install a plug in timer and allow approx 6-8 hours per day UV exposure to your animals.

## Tank Decoration

Ornaments are important as they provide both aesthetics and shelter for your reptile. Selecting an ornament is mostly personal preference, but consideration for the reptile should also be provided. The ornament should be able to be sterilised, have a surface for your animal to bask, and there should be a place for them to hide if they wish.



**Further information on diet, hygiene, vitamins, Vets and much more is available from the team at Kellyville Pets.**

At Kellyville Pets, we encourage responsible pet ownership.

Phone 9629 3282 OPEN 7 DAYS  
106B Windsor Rd Kellyville NSW 2155  
[www.kellyvillepets.com.au](http://www.kellyvillepets.com.au)

**Kellyville Pets**  
WE LOVE PETS