



Jungle Bob's Care Sheet

Bearded Dragons (*Pogona vitticeps*)

General Information

Challenging the Leopard Gecko for title of the world's most popular pet lizard, the Bearded Dragon is easy to breed, very calm in temperament, and very most in appearance – all in all, a perfect pet for beginners and old pros alike.

The Bearded Dragon's range encompasses central Australia and the inland portions of eastern Australia, where it inhabits brushy grasslands, thorn scrub, and desert fringes.



The tan to dark brown body is a bit flattened in form (to allow for maximum sun exposure) and 16-24 inches long. Pointed scales on the throat's loose skin (the "beard") can be raised in a threat display.

Housing

Youngsters can be raised in 10-20 gallon aquariums, while a single adult requires a 40-55 gallon tank. Bearded Dragons sometimes suffer intestinal impactions from sand swallowed with food, although many do quite well on sand. Most keepers opt for [terrarium liners](#), or move their pets to a bare-bottomed enclosure at meal time. Driftwood serves well as a basking site.

Bearded Dragons require an ambient temperature of 75-85 F and a basking temperature of 100 -110 F. A nighttime reduction in temperature, to 70 F or so, is beneficial. If your home is cooler than these temperatures at night you will need a red or other dark-colored heat bulb. Humidity should be kept low, and the substrate must remain dry.

Your pets need 12-14 hours per day of [UVB light](#), which enables them to produce vitamin D3. Vitamin D3 metabolizes the calcium in the diet. Calcium is needed for proper bone development. Inadequate UVB exposure and calcium intake will result in a crippling and often fatal condition known as Metabolic Bone Disease. Also, it is very important to change your UVB light every 6-8 months, as after this time the light stops producing adequate UVB.

If you're not sure whether your bulb is still producing UVB, bring it in and we'll be happy to test it for you. Proper heat and UVB can be obtained by using the [Jungle Bob Desert Sun 100w Bulb](#).

Diet

Bearded Dragons are carnivorous when young, adding increasing amounts of plant material to the diet as they mature. They fare best when provided mixed salads of, string beans, collard greens, squash, dandelion, carrots and seasonally available greens. DO NOT feed spinach, as it binds calcium, rendering it unavailable to your pets.

The protein portion of the diet should include butter worms, crickets, roaches, silk worms, hornworms, calci-worms and other commercially available species. Insects should themselves be provided with a nutritious diet for 1-3 days before being offered to your pets. Commercial Bearded Dragon pellets can make up approximately 20% of the diet if you wish. Powdered calcium and vitamin/mineral supplements should be used 1-2 times weekly for adult lizards, and on most meals fed to juveniles. Adults can be fed on alternate days, juveniles 5-6 times per week.

A water bowl should be available, but many individuals prefer to lap water that has been sprayed onto rocks and other surfaces.

Cleaning and Handling

The terrarium should be cleaned as necessary, with fecal matter and left-over food being removed daily. The substrate should be completely changed once each month. The inside of the terrarium can be cleaned out with an appropriate reptile cage cleaner: we recommend [Natural Chemistry's Healthy Habitat](#).

Bearded Dragons are among the easiest of lizards to handle, but like all reptiles will defend themselves by biting if stressed. Always wash your hands before and after handling any animal.

Fun Fact

The millions of Bearded Dragons legally kept as pets the world over seem to have originated from a small group that was smuggled from Australia (where they are protected by law) to Germany in the early 1980's.

Jungle Bob's Reptile World

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www.JungleBobsReptileWorld.com

Maps courtesy of the University of Texas Libraries.