

## Central Bearded Dragon.

*Pogona vitticeps*

## Pygmy Bearded Dragon.

*Pogona henrylawsoni*

**Lifespan:** 10-15 years

**Size:** 20-25cm (pygmy) | 40-60cm (central)

**Enclosure:** Minimum 120 x 45 x 60cm for a central bearded dragon and minimum 90 x 45 x 60cm for a pygmy bearded dragon

**Diet:** Live insects, fruits and vegetables

**Care Level:** Intermediate



## Enclosure.

Bearded dragons are active, sun-loving reptiles that spend considerable time basking each day. Dragons are solitary animals and should be housed on their own, otherwise you may face dominance and aggression issues between dragons.

For one pygmy bearded dragon a glass or timber enclosure of at least 90 x 45 x 60cm is recommended, however a central bearded dragon will require an enclosure of 120 x 45 x 60cm. It is important that the enclosure has sufficient ventilation as well as a secure, lockable door.

The enclosure should be furnished with basking logs or rocks, a background, artificial plants and a water and feed dish. An absorbent substrate is also important such as a fine-grade desert sand.

## Maintenance.

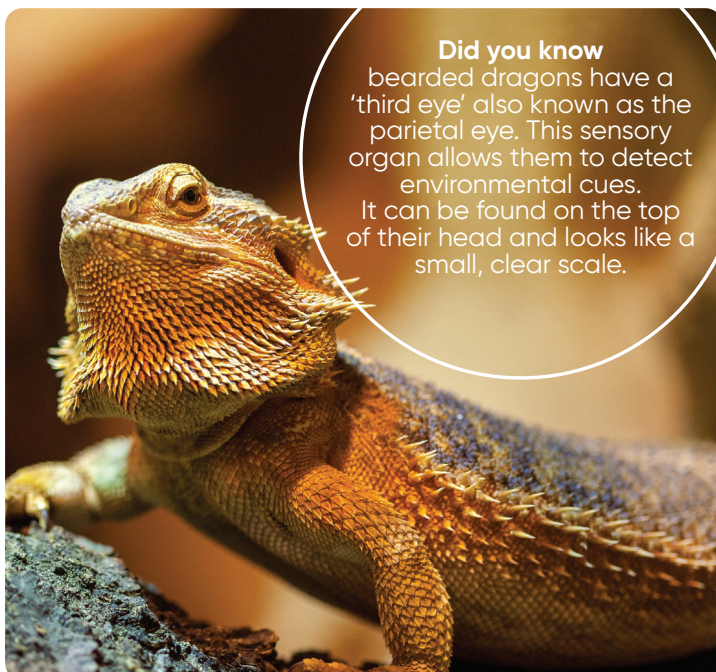
Bearded dragons have a very specific set of requirements in regards to general care, however if all of these elements are provided they thrive in captivity.

Providing adequate temperature gradients within a dragon's enclosure is essential for their health and wellbeing. Bearded dragons require a hot basking spot maintained between 38-42°C. They should have access to an elevated piece of timber or rock ornament to allow them to bask within 15cm of the heat source. The cool end of the enclosure should be maintained between 24-26°C and should not drop below 15-18°C at night.

Temperatures should be checked daily and must be regulated with the use of a good quality thermostat. Recommended sources of heat include the use of incandescent, halogen, carbon fibre (night time) and mercury vapour globes along with a heat mat as a secondary source of heating.

Ultraviolet light (UV) plays an important role in a dragon's growth and development. A 10.0 (or stronger) UVB tube or compact globe must be used as a source of artificial UV lighting in the dragon's enclosure. Dragon's should also have access to unfiltered, natural light at least once or twice a week. They also require a 'day and night' cycle with heat lights running for approximately 10-12 hours and UV lights for 4-6 hours each day.

It is important to maintain high standards of cleanliness and hygiene within the dragon's enclosure. Daily 'spot checks' should be carried out, sifting substrate to remove any faeces, shed skin or uneaten food. A full substrate change should be carried out every 2-3 months (depending on what substrate is used) and the enclosure thoroughly cleaned with a reptile-safe disinfectant.



**Did you know**  
bearded dragons have a 'third eye' also known as the parietal eye. This sensory organ allows them to detect environmental cues. It can be found on the top of their head and looks like a small, clear scale.

## Diet.

Bearded dragons are omnivores and feed on a range of live insects and plant matter. In captivity bearded dragons should be fed a variety of both live foods and fruits and vegetables.

Hatchling and juvenile dragons will consume more live food than vegetables (approximately 80:20) with sub-adult and adult dragons consuming more fruits and vegetables (approximately 50:50).

Live foods include; crickets, woodies, mealworms (in moderation) and silkworms. All live foods should be dusted with a calcium and multivitamin powder 2-3 times a week before being offered. Live insects should be no larger than the space between the lizard's eyes. Fruits and vegetables that can be offered include; kale, endive, parsley, Asian greens, apple, carrot, beans, broccoli, zucchini and squash. Commercially available lizard pellets can also be mixed through the chopped fruits and vegetables to provide extra nutrition to the dragon. Juvenile dragons should be fed daily (live food twice daily for very young hatchlings) and adults can be offered food every second or third day.

Fresh water should be available to the dragon at all times and changed daily. Young hatchlings also enjoy a very light misting of water on hot days in summer and often drink droplets of water off ornaments in the enclosure.



### Thinking about getting a bearded dragon?

We'll teach you everything you need to know from setting up your enclosure, feeding and caring for your bearded dragon.

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## Common Health Issues.

**Intestinal Parasites (worms):** Bearded dragons are susceptible to worms, including the potentially fatal coccidiosis organism. Faecal checks and worming can be carried out by an experienced reptile veterinarian.

**Dysecdysis (Abnormal Shedding):** Low humidity levels can sometimes result in a dragon having an 'incomplete' shed.

**Metabolic Bone Disease (MBD):** Calcium or vitamin D3 deficiency as a result of incorrect diet and/or lack of or incorrect UV lighting.

### Red Flags.

If you notice any of the following symptoms, please contact your vet.

- Loss of appetite • Diarrhoea • Lethargy • Retained skin around toes or tail tip • Abnormal movements
- Disorientation • Twitching/tremors

## Essentials.

Products required to care for your bearded dragon:

Enclosure (min. 120 x 45 x 60cm for a central bearded dragon and 90 x 45 x 60cm for a pygmy bearded dragon)  
Water bowl  
Feed dish  
Basking log  
Substrate  
Hide

Background  
Artificial plants  
Heat fitting and globe  
UV fitting and globe  
Thermostat  
Heat mat  
Thermometer  
Timer

Reptile disinfectant  
Live food  
Lizard pellets  
Calcium and multivitamin powder  
Cricket keeper  
Fruit and vegetables



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