

Bioactivity and Bearded Dragons

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From the desk of the Dude

Bearded dragons are one of the most commonly kept pet reptiles in the United States. Many keepers choose to keep their dragons on different types of sand, newspaper, or tile. With these simple type of setups routine cleaning, disinfecting, time and money is wasted going into maintaining these un-naturalistic enclosures to keep your Dragons healthy. When utilizing the common calcium sand such as (reptilite, play sand etc) many times the sand will become a bad bacteria pit from the fecal matter, dead skin, and leftover food particles left from your dragon. When left unchecked this will create an unsanitary living environment for your dragon that can cause long and short term health issues such as respiratory infections, skin infections, and anorexia.

That is where the Dude comes in. Bearded Dragons are one of the best, if not the best BioActive terrarium candidates when it comes to keeping them as pets. Keeping them in a BioActive environment provides necessary enrichment as well as a clean, stable environment in which they can forage, burrow, dig, and even lay their eggs without disrupting their environment! With the Dudes Terra Sahara BioActive substrate, essential bacteria and mycorrhizal fungi aid in breaking down organic matter and turning it into a viable, nutrient rich resource for your soil and plants to flourish within the terrarium itself. Not only does the substrate benefit from these natural processes, the springtails and isopods (commonly referred to as microfauna) that we establish into the vivarium also provide proper air pockets in the substrate to prevent anaerobic bacteria growth and clean up your vivarium by breaking down organic matter such a feces, left over food, and biodegradeables. Once established, the Terra Sahara BioActive substrate will never need changed or replaced. It is as simple as adding more biodegradeables and you are good to go.



The Terra Sahara, which is the substrate recommended for Bearded Dragons was specifically designed to replicate the harsh, desert, rocky biomes found all over the world. This dense, heavy substrate retains all burrows and tunnels that your animals create over time, as well as maintain proper air pockets (with the help of the microfauna) to keep the root systems and substrate healthy over time. Initially when setting up the Sahara it is recommend to give the tank a heavy watering, so all layers of substrate are moist, but not dripping. Over time, the top layer of the Sahara will completely dry out, leaving the middle and bottom layer moist, which is exactly what arid plants such as succulents and cacti require. After initial setup the tank will need misted daily. It is very important to never let your Sahara dry out completely on all levels. This will kill the necessary microfauna which play a vital role in the clean up aspect of the bioactivity.

Considering their size, Bearded Dragons can be quite messy and smelly when they go to the bathroom. With the substrate the smell aspect will almost be completely removed, leaving a fresh, pleasant odor in the terrarium even after your Beardies go to the bathroom. After some time the natural biological and integrated processes in the terrarium will break down the feces and turn it into a viable source of nutrition for your soil and plants. One of the biggest things to remember is that you will have to spot clean your tank initially once setup. Typically, after 2-3 months the natural biological drivers and clean up crew kick in to start cleaning the tank for you. After this is established it is recommended to do a light spot clean monthly to make sure everything is being cleaned up.

Bearded dragons make such excellent candidates for this because they are very active animals that thrive on enrichment. The ability to dig tunnels and burrows is a must for this species. Being from Australia from the denser woodlands to the arid shrub lands these lizards commonly will dig themselves a deep, dense burrow to protect themselves from the harsh sun. These burrows not only help them thermoregulate, but it also aids with respiration, shedding, and the overall health of your lizard. These hides become quite humid and that helps keep them hydrated throughout the day. When the sun is not at its highest point in the sky these lizards will typically come out of their caves and start foraging for food. During this time, some dragons may dig looking for insects that are in the soil. Others may go climb a tree looking for that perfect piece of vegetation to devour. Instinctual foraging, digging, and offering different types of food resources is very important for this species. With the Isopods established in the terrarium your Beardie may find a snack in his digging adventure.



With herbivores and omnivores in general it is recommended to offer different edibles in the enclosure to allow for foraging throughout the day. Live plants such as Ficus, Hibiscus, Opuntia Cacti, Basil, Oregano, Mint, Rosemary, and even lettuce can be planted in the vivarium to let

your beardie forage for food as nature intended. Some plants may be destroyed as early as a day, others may take a few weeks. The Dude recommends offering an assortment to see what plants your Beardie loves the most! This is exactly where the Terra Sahara comes into play. With the perfect blend of ingredients this soil replicates their harsh environment to a tee and allows the owner to establish different live plants in the terrarium while allowing your Beardies to do what nature intended.



Another positive when utilizing the Terra Sahara is that it can provide a nesting site for your female Beardies. When your girl is ready to deposit her eggs be sure to provide at least a 10" deep layer of Sahara that has a relative humidity of 80%. Your girls will lay right there (without destroying their tank and stressing them out) and the eggs can be left or pulled - which ever is desired.

One of the most common questions that I receive is "what if my dragon eats some of the substrate, will he be ok?" To answer this question simply, it depends. Impaction occurs when the animal is not able to process a foreign body. It then becomes stuck inside the abdomen causing septicemia and death. In 99% of cases, impaction is caused because of improper husbandry. Overall, a healthy reptile and amphibian ingests substrate every single day in their natural habitat. They have evolved to be able to handle things such as this. Think about it - in the wild, if a healthy lizard ate just a small amount of soil when catching a roach, do you really think that lizard would die? So to be frank, If your reptile is unhealthy or being kept improperly, their body starts to not function properly and basic homeostasis becomes affected. When this happens their immune system becomes compromised as well as their overall internal processes which is when the body is not able to deal with a foreign body and impaction occurs. If you are

practicing proper husbandry and pay attention to your animal impaction should never be a concern.

The best part about keeping reptiles and amphibians as pets is to visually see how unique of an animal they are. It is about giving them the best care possible. It is about providing them with everything that they need to be happy. That is what the Dude is about. Offering a natural, BioActive BioDude setup not only makes your pets feel more at home, but it saves you money and time by providing the best reptile husbandry on the market. The Dude is happy to sell complete Bearded Dragon BioActive Kits, healthy edibles, and BioActive substrates to give your Dragon the home they deserve!

[Bearded Dragon BioActive Kit](#)

[Terra Sahara BioActive Kit](#)

That is one happy Bearded Dragon with one happy Momma ;)



The Dude Abides