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Photo by Piscetes Pet Emporium

Bearded Dragon

Pogona vitticeps

Lifespan: 10 to 15 years.

Size: Adults reach 20 to 24 inches in total length.

Sexing: Males have 2 hemipene bulges at the base of their tail, and large pores along their inner thighs.

Enclosure: A 24x18x18 tank is sufficient for a baby Bearded Dragon, but adults should be housed in an all-glass tank or PVC no less than 36x18x18" or 4x2x2'. Never house more than one bearded dragon in a single enclosure. ***Piscetes Recommends: EcoFlex PVC Reptile Lounge or Exo Terra Glass Enclosures.***

Hiding/Climbing Spots: Hiding spots are not necessary but they do enjoy climbing so provide some branches or rocks. Providing a basking rock under the heat lamp will help your dragon moderate its temperature. Shale or other rock types work well

Humidity: The enclosure should be well ventilated with a maximum humidity of 40%. If the humidity is too high respiratory infections can occur. Occasional misting will help with shedding, as will a 15-20-minute warm bath. Use a hygrometer/combometer to constantly monitor humidity levels, digital hygrometers are the most accurate. Provide a water dish for fresh water.

Substrate: For baby Bearded Dragons reptile carpet is the recommended. Babies can be vigorous eaters and should be kept off sand because ingestion of the substrate can lead to impaction of the intestines. For adults, reptile carpet, tile, or sand and other desert substrates can be used. ***Piscetes recommends: Zilla Repta-liner, Zilla Desert Blend or Exo Terra Desert Stone.***

Heat: A Bearded Dragon's tank should have an ambient temperature of 75-85° with a basking area of 110-115°. Use a heat bulb on one portion of the tank so that your Bearded Dragon can escape the basking area if they get too hot. If there is insufficient heat your Bearded Dragon will become lethargic and could stop eating and drinking. ***Piscetes recommends: ExoTerra and Arcadia bulbs and fixtures.***

UV Lighting: Bearded Dragons require a full spectrum UVB bulb for 10-12 hours per day. UVB bulbs lose effectiveness and need to be replaced every 6-10 months. ***Piscetes Recommends: Arcadia T5 D3+ 14% Dragon Bulb and Fixture***

Feeding: A Bearded Dragon's diet should include crickets, worms, and vegetables (dark greens, dandelion leaves, root vegetables, squash, peppers, lettuce). Fruit should make up only a small portion of their diet. Avoid any spinach, or other vegetables that impede the ability to take in vitamins and bind calcium.

Bearded Dragons will often eat as many crickets as you give them; they can be fed 2-5-week-old crickets every day to every other day. Make sure the cricket is no larger than the space between their eyes. Worms can be offered instead of crickets but not recommended to babies as they have hard exoskeletons which tend to be harder to digest their crickets. Once full size, bearded dragons can have a pinky mouse or hornworm as a treat a couple times a month.

Vitamins & Supplements: Dust crickets with a calcium supplement every feeding as well as a vitamin every third feeding. To get more veggies into their diet a veggie dust can be added to insects and salad.

Pisces recommends: Repashy Calcium Plus, Supervite and Superveggie or, Pangea Pangeacal

Handling: Hatchlings and Babies are fragile and should be handled with caution. When they become Juveniles and adults, they can be handled more frequently without trouble and will often lay on your shoulder as you relax or do work. Despite being very friendly and tolerant, it is not recommended to handle your bearded dragon for extended periods of time to prevent them getting too cold.

Coccidiosis: Also known as Coccidia. This is very common in Bearded Dragons. Signs of infection include very little activity, lying completely flat more than standing, and reduced appetite. If you notice any of these signs, take your Bearded Dragon to a qualified Reptile Veterinarian immediately. Respiratory infections can also occur if the humidity is too high.

Cleaning: Bearded Dragons should be spot cleaned as often as possible. Babies should have their tanks cleaned weekly and adults should have their sand sifted every day and replaced completely every six months. Glass can be cleaned and disinfected with Zoomed Wipeout terrarium glass cleaner/disinfectant.

Safe Handling of Reptiles*: As with all living creatures, reptiles can carry microorganisms (including Salmonella) which can make people ill. To reduce the chances of infection, always follow these safe handling steps:

- Always wash your hands thoroughly after you handle your pet, its food and anything it has touched.
- Keep your pet in a habitat designed for it; do not let your pet reptile roam around the home without proper supervision.
- Keep your pet, its food dishes and cage components out of the kitchen.
- Don't nuzzle or kiss your pet.
- Infants, children under 5 years of age, pregnant women, the elderly, and those with a compromised immune system have a greater risk of infection. Extra caution should be taken when they are in contact with any animal. Children under 5 should handle reptiles only under adult/parent supervision.

Your New Pet: It is the responsibility of any pet owner to provide their pet with regular veterinary care to maintain their pet's health and to prevent illness. Should you experience any problems with your new pet, contact Pisces Pet Emporium. We will make every effort to assist you, but we may refer you to a qualified veterinarian if the problem is beyond our ability to treat. A pet is a large responsibility and should not be purchased without due consideration. Pets should never be released into the wild.

Pisces Recommended Setup:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Glass/PVC terrarium (Exo Terra Large 36x18x18" or 4x2x2' EcoFlex Reptile Lounge) ❑ Exo Terra/NewCal Pet branches for climbing ❑ Rock/shale to give a nice basking rock ❑ Exo Terra/Zoomed/Pet-Tekk water dish ❑ Zilla Repti-liner, Exo Terra Desert Stone, or Zilla Desert Blend for substrate ❑ Magnaturals Magnetic ledges for climbing and resting ❑ Exo Terra medium feeding dish for worms ❑ If extra heat is needed for night, use a 50-80W Arcadia Deep Heat Projector & the Arcadia Ceramic Clamp Lamp 150W | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Exo Terra 150watt Intense Basking Lamp & Flukers 8.5in Dimmable Deluxe Clamp Lamp ❑ Arcadia T5 Pro D3+ 14% UVB Dragon Kit ❑ Repashy Calcium Plus ❑ Repashy Supervite multivitamin ❑ Repashy SuperVeggie for dusting vegetables ❑ Crickets/worms (dependent on size of animal) ❑ Exo Terra thermometer, hydrometer or combometer ❑ Eco-Fresh dubia roaches can be very good to increase diet variation |
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**Safe handling information courtesy of PIJAC Canada*