

Bearded Dragons

Keeping a Bearded Dragon

Bearded dragons are extremely cool, although they can be quite technical to keep.

In the wild they are found in Australia's deserts, so they require care that simulates this environment as closely as possible.



Feeding

Whilst they are young they require 90% of their diet to be live such as crickets and locusts. It is advisable to 'gut load' the insects; this means letting the insects feed on a nutritional supplement before feeding to allow the bearded dragon to get all of the vitamins and minerals they require. The insects may also be dusted in nutrients however often the insects shake the powder off before the bearded dragon has time to consume these.

It is really important to watch your lizard eating the insects because, if there are insects left in the vivarium for a long length of time the insect may bite the bearded dragon and cause an infection. As the bearded dragon enters adulthood they will only require insects to make up 25% of the diet. Dark leafy green vegetables should make up 50% of the diet and vegetables the rest. One to two times a week the food should be dusted with a calcium supplement to ensure their calcium requirements are met.

Water should be provided in a large shallow dish in which they can lay in, though in the wild if it is lightly raining they will stand on their hind legs and lick the rain from the air. It is also important that bearded dragons are bathed at least once a week as they will absorb fluid through their cloaca (bottom).

The vivarium

The vivarium must be kept at a hot temperature to replicate Australia. The low end should be between 27-31 degrees C and the higher end 33-38 degrees C. At night it should be kept at 21-24 degrees C. The minimum size of the vivarium should be three times their full length, though the larger the better.

In the wild a bearded dragon will roam around 4.5 miles in its lifetime. It is important to keep the humidity between 35-40% which can be measured with a hydrometer. It is also important that bearded dragons receive UV light to allow them to produce vitamin D which is important in absorbing calcium.

UVB is supplied by a specialised bulb. The bulb should be at least 12% and they have use by dates on the packets - it is important the date is adhered to as otherwise the quantity of UVB may be too little.



Healthcare

It is important that that once a year bearded dragons have a healthcheck and to check their faeces for parasites.

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