

Pet Care of a Bearded Dragon



Bearded dragons are from the lizard species. They are often referred to as "beardies" and are one of the most popular lizards in captivity in the UK. Their name comes from the spikey folds of skin around their neck, which inflate and turn black when they are excited or defending themselves.

They originate from the dry scrublands and woodlands of Australia, therefore in captivity they need their environment to replicate their natural surroundings in the wild.

Environment

Bearded dragons must be kept in a vivarium. This is a large, secure, glass enclosure. A recommended size to accommodate one lizard is a vivarium which is 120cm long and 60cm high. Beardies can grow up to 45cm long and need room to move around and stretch out.

As bearded dragons are ectothermic and use the environment to regulate their body temperature, they need a warm end of the vivarium and a cool end. There must also be a basking zone, which is the warmest part of the enclosure. They like to lie, or bask, on a natural stone near the heat lamp provided. A thermostat must be installed to ensure the temperature doesn't fluctuate. It must not drop below 22°C at night.

Substrate

The base of the vivarium needs to be covered with a sand and soil mixture, due to the bearded dragon's natural instinct to dig. Stone tiles should have ridges to help the reptile grip.



Did You Know?

Bearded dragons are diurnal which means they are active during the day.



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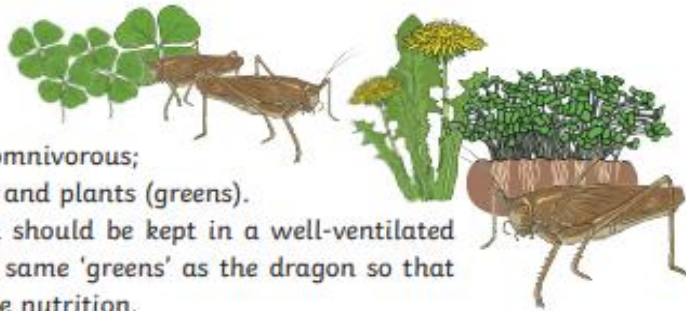


Light

Lizards use the ultraviolet light from the sun to make vitamin D in their skin. This is essential for the storage and use of calcium in their bodies. A special UV light must be installed in their vivarium.

Diet

Bearded dragons are omnivorous; they eat live invertebrates and plants (greens). They like live food, which should be kept in a well-ventilated container and fed the the same 'greens' as the dragon so that the lizard benefits from the nutrition.



Safe Greens	Live Food
watercress	
rocket	
cress	crickets
grated butternut squash	locusts
dandelions	calciworms
clover	
plantain leaves	

These lizards must not have spinach, as it affects the dragon's ability to absorb calcium into their bodies.

Feeding Tips

- Remove any uneaten live foods as they can bite the lizard;
- Cover the live food with supplement powder to ensure the lizards get all of the nutrients they need.

Two's Company

Bearded dragons are fiercely territorial. Males live a solitary life and in the wild, chase other males from their space. Females can fight if they are in groups - they have been known to bite off the toes of other lizards and sometimes kill! Captive bearded dragons should be singular.

Signs of a healthy lizard:

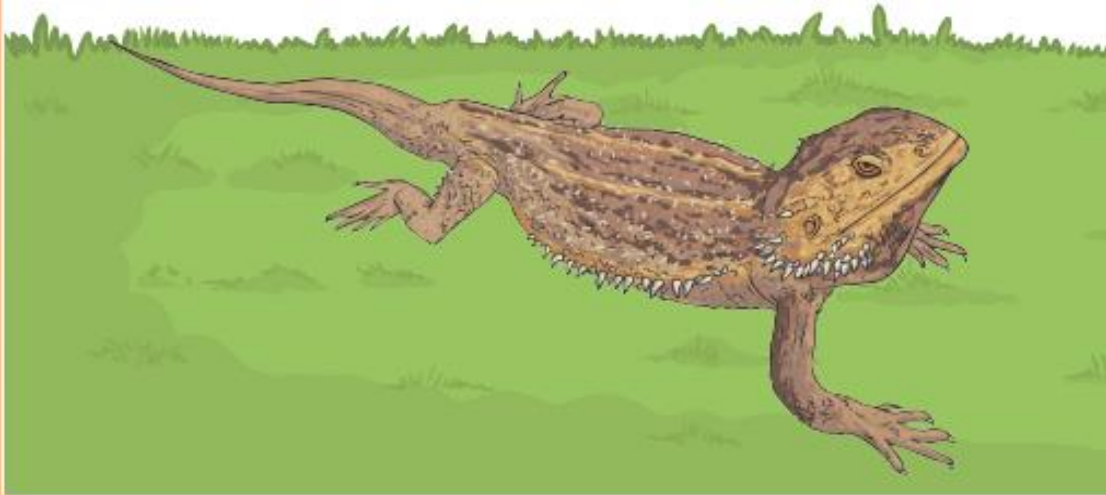
- clear, bright eyes;
- thick base to their tail;
- hips will not be sticking out;
- bright colour after basking.

Signs of calcium deficiency:

- muscle twitching;
- swollen legs;
- fragile bones;
- deformed limbs, spine, jaw.

Sunbathing Lizard

A bearded dragon can be taken outside on sunny, warm days to feel the benefit of natural UV light. Shade must be available and the reptile must be constantly supervised.



Questions

1. Explain how bearded dragons came to be known by this name.

2. Why do you think their captive environment needs to replicate their natural environment?

3. Explain why the vivarium needs to be secure and large.

4. A thermostat must be installed to 'ensure the temperature doesn't fluctuate'. What does this mean?

5. A new owner of a bearded dragon is planning to put newspaper in the bottom of the vivarium. Explain what you think of this idea, and what other suggestions would you make?

Wednesday 8th December

Book Review

Book Title: _____ Author: _____ Fiction or Non-fiction: _____	Who would you recommend the book to? Why?
What is the book about?	<div data-bbox="635 680 1023 1308" style="text-align: center;">Book Illustration</div> <div data-bbox="1018 819 1444 927">Rating: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★</div> <div data-bbox="1031 954 1444 1084">Can you write three facts you have learnt or three things you have learnt about one of the characters?</div> <div data-bbox="975 1249 1430 1424">1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____</div>