



komodo®

CARE GUIDE

BEARDED DRAGON



CONGRATULATIONS! Bearded Dragons make great pets and we're sure you'll enjoy each other's company for many years to come. Choosing the correct enclosure and equipment is an important first step. Komodo reptile products are designed to ensure your new reptile pet gets off to a great start.

ABOUT BEARDED DRAGONS

Bearded Dragons (*Pogona vitticeps*) are sun loving lizards that are native to Australia. They get their name from the spiky beard on their throat, which turns black when the lizard is stressed. Beardies commonly reach around 40cm – 50cm when adult, although larger specimens can be found. In the wild these lizards will generally live to around 5-8 years, but with good care a pet Beardie can live for up to 14 years.

ENCLOSURES

An enclosure measuring W100xD45xH50 is suitable for adult and sub-adult Bearded Dragons.

SUBSTRATE

Komodo Coconut Terrain is ideal substrates for the base of the vivarium. Add a layer approximately an inch thick and spot clean any soiled areas immediately. Replace the substrate completely every few weeks and be sure to clean and disinfect the enclosure before adding new bedding..

HEATING

Bearded Dragons like it hot, but they still need somewhere cool to retreat to when necessary. The enclosure should offer a range of temperatures from 37°C (99°F) at one end of the enclosure under the heat source, to 21°C (70°F) at the cool end. Position the lamp dome on top of the vivarium screen mesh approximately 1/3 of the way from one end. This will enable your lizard to move into cooler or warmer areas as required. The heat mat in the kit is ideal for providing a secondary heat source for use day and night. The heat mat can be positioned at the same end of the enclosure as the lamp, on the wall, either inside or outside the enclosure. Placing both heating devices at one side of the habitat will create the correct thermal gradient. Be sure to switch off the heat bulb at night.

NEVER INSTALL HEAT MATS ON THE FLOOR OF THE ENCLOSURE AND THEN COVER, AND WITH SUBSTRATE.

CONTROL AND MONITORING

Check temperatures using the thermometer on the dual gauge. Komodo Advanced Heat Mats must be used with a suitable thermostat such as the Komodo On/Off Thermostat provided. Best practice recommends placing a thermometer at both the hot end and the cool end to facilitate regular monitoring of the temperatures. ***Remember that Heat Mats emit infrared heat and thermometers must be in contact with the mat to register the temperature.***

SHELTER

Make sure that there are a choice of hides and shelters spanning several parts of the enclosure. Your lizard should be able to hide away and still have access its preferred part of the thermal gradient.

WATER

Bearded Dragons rarely drink from water bowls, so be sure to spray the enclosure every day so that they can drink droplets of water from plants and terrarium furniture. Many keepers provide a daily bath in a shallow container to encourage drinking. This can take place outside of the vivarium, supervision is required at all times when using this method.

LIGHTING

Bearded dragons need a lot of vitamin D3 and Komodo's high powered UVB fluorescent tubes are ideal for that purpose. Set up an optimum basking spot that allows your animal to get heat and UVB in the same place, ideally 4-15cm from the UVB tube. Adding a reflector shade behind the tube will deflect more light into the enclosure, doubling the UVB available for your animal. The UVB tube can be situated under the wire top secured by the clamps with the ballast. Alternately it can be placed on top of the screen. Remember to provide areas of shade too. Plants, rocks, hides and shelters will provide different degrees of shade; something that is often overlooked when providing UVB for reptiles. Remember to replace your UVB fluorescent tube every six months as their output diminishes over time. Spotlight bulbs used as a heat source will also light the enclosure during the day time, but be sure to switch these off at night.

ENRICHMENT

Use the cork bark provided to create climbing opportunities and basking areas. Artificial plants are great for dressing your vivarium and providing somewhere for your lizard to drink water droplets after the enclosure has been sprayed.



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FEEDING

Bearded Dragons are omnivores and so need both plant and animal matter in their diet. Young Bearded Dragons will eat a diet of mainly insects with a little vegetation to supplement. Adults will do the opposite, eating mainly vegetation, along with a few bugs. Choosing the right size bugs is important. They should never be larger than the space between the eyes of your lizard. Insects are available from most pet stores, as are Komodo's specialist dried vegetation diets picked especially for Bearded Dragons. Be sure to use the correct supplements too. Both insect and plant foods should be dusted with a multi-nutrient dusting powder, such as Komodo Nutri-Cal, every other feed. Use a calcium supplement, such as Komodo Calcium Dusting Powder, on the days in between.

HANDLING

After setting up your new enclosure, leave your Bearded Dragon to settle in before attempting to handle it. Once your lizard has eaten a few meals in succession, then it is time to start handling. Bearded Dragons can be nervous when young but do calm down with age. Adult Bearded Dragons seem to enjoy interaction with their keepers. Offer your hands as a perch, allowing your lizard to walk from one hand to another. Never grip your lizard tightly or restrict its movement. Holding them close to the ground is a good idea and be sure that your lizard cannot jump onto any dangerous surfaces. As with all animal care, thoroughly wash hands after handling or cleaning your lizard's enclosure.

IN CONCLUSION, Bearded Dragons are great companions and they are easy to care for. Below are some timely reminders on Bearded Dragon care in the handy format of a checklist:

Bearded dragon Checklist

DAILY

- Offer water by spraying
- Check correct temperatures are being maintained
- Spot clean soiled areas
- Remove any uneaten live food
- Visually inspect Bearded Dragon
- Feed if required, use dusting powder such as Nutri-Cal on every other feed
- Wash hands after servicing habitat or handling animals

WEEKLY

- Clean glass
- Top up substrate
- Clean any decorative rocks, plants etc.
- Physically inspect animal
- Weigh Bearded Dragon and record data

MONTHLY

- Remove and replace all substrate
- Replace Komodo 10% UVB Sun Strip Tube

NOTE: This basic wellbeing guide will help to get you started. It highlights the most important information that every keeper needs to know, but new keepers should research the husbandry needs of their animal in detail.

