



CARE SHEET

Welcome to our care sheet. The following is the basic care that has been passed down through breeders, hobbyists, and herpetologists. We hope that you follow these suggestions to maintain a happy and healthy lifestyle for your dragon.

ENCLOSURE AND CAGING

You will need at least an 18"x 24" enclosure for your new baby. For adults we recommend a 2'x 4' enclosure. We prefer to use properly ventilated wooden enclosures with a front sliding glass doors or doors that open out (for less sand grinding noise). This design is more efficient than a glass aquarium because of its insulating properties and stacking durability. Another reason not to use a glass aquarium is because the dragon can see out from all sides and has nowhere to feel safe. This can lead to stress and constant scratching at the glass.

SUBSTRATE

Substrates are an important part of the health and wellbeing of your dragon. For newborns we use paper towels because it's a cleaner environment and prevents impaction. After three months we move the babies onto washed, grated play sand. Do not use industrial grade sand because the dust levels can be toxic to your dragon. We are NOT promoters of use of calcium-based substrates, like the colored man-made sand sold in pet stores. If too much of this is ingested it can cause impaction and calcium coating of the stomach which prevents proper food and vitamin absorption. We also do NOT recommend using wood shavings or shell substrate for the same reason of impaction. Impaction can cause death to your dragon if not properly treated by a vet.

CAGE CLEANING

You must keep your enclosure clean on a daily basis. We recommend using a sifter to scoop out fecal matter and other debris. Every three to four months depending on the cleanliness of sand we do a complete sand change. This is not necessary during brumation months (winter rest). Also be sure to keep the glass clean, wiping down any fecal matter that may be on the surface. This helps in preventing bacteria levels in the cage. If not using a natural cleaner, make sure there is no residue left behind.

BASKING, TEMPERATURE AND CAGE FURNITURE

An adequate, elevated basking area is needed for the enclosure. You can use natural rock such as flagstone or shale, rocks used from outside must be cleaned thoroughly with an anti-bacterial cleaning agent. You can also use ceramic or other types of man-made basking rocks, which can be purchased from pet stores or online at www.reptiledirect.com. We strongly suggest staying away from heat rocks that

plug into the wall. They are well known to burn the stomachs of dragons and other reptiles. Depending on what wattage lamp you use, the basking area should be approximately 12 inches from the bulb. The use of wood branches within the enclosure is fine as long as they are clean. We suggest the use of grape vine or cholla, which can also be purchased on line or in pet stores.

For the babies the basking area in the enclosure should be 105°-110° and the cool side should be 80°-85°. For sub-adults to adults the basking area should be approximately 105° with the cool side 80°-85°. Night time temperatures can fall into the low 70°'s. The use of infrared lighting is not necessary unless your household temperature falls below 70°, then we suggest a ceramic heater. Only during brumation can and should the temperature fall below 70°. This ensures their metabolism is at a slower rate but do not let the temperature fall below 60°.

Proper lighting is crucial to your dragon's health, especially if it is not exposed to natural unfiltered sun light. The dragon greatly depends on UV rays to produce vitamin D3 and to metabolize calcium absorption. Without these UV rays your dragon will suffer from MBD (metabolic bone disease) and gout. There are many types of lighting available these days; we suggest you use a heat lamp in the basking area and a florescent UV bulb. The best UV florescent bulb available at this time is a Zoo Med 10.0. You can find the Zoo Med at a fair price through www.drsfostersmith.com. There are many types of heat lamps on the market, some are quite costly and in our experience we have found that the GE Reveal spot light is the best buy for your money. They come in a 50 and 65 watt spot light. The other option is a mercury vapor bulb (MVB) also known as the Mega Ray, which combines the UV and the heat source. The MVB should be used in conjunction with a non-UV florescent bulb. This set up creates the highest output of UVA and UVB rays with a natural light setting but also is the most costly. **WARNING:** The mercury vapor bulbs, in some cases, put out quite a bit of heat and the distance between the bulb and the basking area has to follow the manufacture's specifications to avoid over heating. A temperature gun is very important to make sure the heating is correct. These items can be purchased at www.reptileuv.com.

In our experience, when using Mega Ray or MVB bulbs it has such a high UVA and UVB output that supplements with D3 is no longer required in their diet. Too high of a level of D3 can be dangerous to your dragon.

DRAGON DIETS

Bearded Dragons are omnivorous reptiles, which means they eat animal protein and vegetables. Babies require higher levels of protein intake in their first six months, as they mature the required protein decreases and by the time they are two years old they are mostly vegetarian. Adults only require protein 2-3x's a week. The diet that we feed our baby dragons consists of phoenix worms, small crickets, small silk worms and greens on a daily basis. Our adult dragons eat larger silk worms, butter worms and greens on a daily basis.

When supplementing our baby dragons we put the crickets in a jar containing calcium powder in the bottom, about 1/8", and give the crickets a few shakes until they are coated with the powder but unharmed. There is no need to coat the phoenix worms because of their high calcium content. We use Rep-cal calcium powder with D3 on a daily basis; it is also available without D3 if your using mercury vapor bulbs. Two to three times a week we supplement with Rep-cal Herptivite multivitamin this is also a powder implemented the same way as calcium. Our greens consist of two or three of the following greens finely chopped; mustard greens, collard greens, dandelion greens, turnip greens, a shredded carrot and Rep-cal juvenile bearded dragon pellets. We sprinkle a few of the pellets in the batch of greens and

allow them to moisten over night. We also add a few sprinkles of T-Rex Dragon Dust (vegie maintenance formula), this is a very good product. These products are also available at www.reptiledirect.com. For an excellent resource of vitamin break down of foods go to www.beautifuldragons.com. As for our adult dragons, they only get supplemented two to three times a week with the same supplements listed above.

WATERING YOUR DRAGON

We recommend keeping a small, shallow dish of fresh water in your dragon's cage. The water should be changed on a daily basis, but not all dragons will drink from a water dish. If your dragon does not drink out of the water dish we suggest using a small dropper to dispense droplets onto its snout in which it should drink readily. You can also spray your dragon with a pump mister daily. To ensure good hydration and health we recommend bathing your dragon once a week in warm water. Some dragons will really enjoy bathing and dunk their heads underwater and other dragons will not like bathing as much.

GROWTH RATE AND ROOMMATES

If properly cared for bearded dragons will grow extremely fast their first year and can mature in 14 months. The average adult dragon is 19"-24". Adult dragons are, by nature, a solitary reptile and should be housed by them selves. Juvenile dragons can be housed together in an adequate sized cage for up to 6 to 8 months of age, if there are any signs of aggression, they will have to be separated immediately. Avoid putting two different sized dragons together as the larger one will dominate the smaller one. If a dragon is completely dominated it will be afraid to eat.

ADJUSTING TO A NEW HOME

Upon arrival of your new dragon there will be a short period of stress. This is common when young dragons are put into a new environment. During this first week try to avoid housing animals together until they are fully adjusted to their new home. In the first couple of days try to avoid over-handling your new pet to reduce stress. This is hard to do, even for us, because of the new excitement but it is better for your dragon to acclimate. Don't be alarmed if your dragon hides for a few days, its personality will come out as he/she adjusts to its new environment.

HEALTH

If for some reason your dragon stops eating and appears lethargic do not hesitate to consult with a reptile vet. If proper lighting and diet is maintained your dragon should live a happy and healthy life. If you have any questions that have not been covered under our care sheet please contact us and we will answer your questions the best we can. A good reading source is The Bearded Dragon Manual by Philippe de Vosjoli and Robert Mailloux, or Breaded Dragons in Captivity by Allen Repashy.

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