

Everything You Need to Know to Have a Healthy and Happy Pet Bearded Dragon



The Complete Bearded Dragon Care Book: Everything You Need To Know To Have A Healthy, Happy Pet Bearded Dragon Including Diet, Housing, Behaviour and Health Care by Robert J. Volpe

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

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Bearded dragons are fascinating creatures that make wonderful pets for those willing to provide the necessary care. With a lifespan of up to 10 years, these reptiles offer years of companionship and entertainment. However, owning a bearded dragon is a significant responsibility, and it's essential to thoroughly understand their specific needs and how to meet them. This comprehensive guide will provide all the information you need to keep your bearded dragon thriving and content.

Habitat

The proper habitat is crucial for the well-being of your bearded dragon. Here's what you need to know:

- **Enclosure Size:** Adult bearded dragons require a spacious enclosure of at least 120 gallons (454 liters) or 4 feet by 2 feet by 2 feet (1.2 meters by 0.6 meters by 0.6 meters).
- **Substrate:** Use a loose, dry substrate such as reptile carpet, tile, or a mixture of sand and excavator clay. Avoid cedar or pine shavings, which can be harmful to your pet's respiratory system.
- **Temperature Gradient:** Bearded dragons require a temperature gradient within their enclosure, with a basking spot of 105-115°F (40.6-46.1°C) and a cool end of 75-85°F (23.9-29.4°C). Use a thermometer to monitor the temperature throughout the enclosure.
- **Lighting:** Provide UVB lighting for 12-14 hours daily, as this is essential for calcium absorption and overall health. Also, include a heat lamp for the basking spot and a night-time heat source to maintain the proper temperature gradient.
- **Hiding Places:** Bearded dragons need places to hide and feel secure. Provide several hides of varying sizes in different parts of the enclosure.
- **Water Dish:** Offer a shallow, non-tippable water dish. Change the water daily and clean the dish regularly.

Diet

Proper nutrition is vital for the health of your bearded dragon. Here's what they should eat:

- **Insects:** Live insects are the primary protein source for bearded dragons. Crickets, dubia roaches, and mealworms are commonly used

and readily available at pet stores. Gut-load the insects with nutritious foods before feeding them to your pet.

- **Vegetables:** Bearded dragons also require a variety of chopped vegetables. Good options include collard greens, dandelion greens, mustard greens, escarole, and bell peppers.
- **Fruits:** Fruits should be given sparingly as treats, as they are high in sugar. Suitable fruits include berries, apples, and bananas.
- **Supplements:** Dust the food with calcium and vitamin D3 supplements regularly to ensure adequate nutrient intake.

Health Care

Regular veterinary care is essential for maintaining the health of your bearded dragon. Here's what you need to know:

- **Routine Vet Check-ups:** Schedule regular check-ups with an exotics veterinarian to monitor your pet's health, check for parasites, and provide preventive care.
- **Parasite Prevention:** Bearded dragons can be susceptible to internal and external parasites. Your veterinarian can recommend appropriate deworming and anti-parasitic treatments.
- **Dental Care:** Bearded dragons have sharp teeth that need to be trimmed occasionally. Your veterinarian can perform this procedure during regular check-ups.
- **Signs of Illness:** Watch for signs of illness in your bearded dragon, such as lethargy, loss of appetite, diarrhea, or changes in behavior. Consult a veterinarian promptly if you notice any abnormalities.

- **Emergency Care:** In case of an emergency, such as an injury or ingestion of a foreign object, seek immediate veterinary attention.

Behavior

Understanding your bearded dragon's behavior is essential for building a strong bond and providing appropriate care. Here's what to watch out for:

- **Basking and Sunbathing:** Bearded dragons love to bask in the sun or under a heat lamp. This behavior helps them regulate their temperature, absorb calcium, and promote overall well-being.
- **Head Bobbing:** A slow, rhythmic head bobbing motion is a sign of submission and acknowledgment. It's often used during social interactions.
- **Arm Waving:** Arm waving can indicate excitement, territorial behavior, or a desire to attract a mate.
- **Beard Puffing:** When a bearded dragon puffs up its beard, it can be a sign of aggression, courting, or submission, depending on the context.
- **Hissing:** Hissing is a defensive behavior used to warn off potential predators or threats.
- **Brumation:** During winter, bearded dragons may enter a state of brumation, where they reduce their activity levels and food intake. Providing a cooling period and reducing the day length duration can help prepare them for brumation.

Caring for a bearded dragon requires commitment and dedication, but the rewards of owning these fascinating creatures are immense. By providing them with the proper habitat, nutrition, health care, and understanding their behavior, you can ensure a long, healthy, and happy life for your pet

bearded dragon. Remember to always consult with an exotics veterinarian if you have any concerns or questions regarding your bearded dragon's well-being.

Disclaimer: The information provided in this article is for general educational purposes only and should not be considered veterinary advice. Always consult with a qualified exotics veterinarian for accurate advice regarding the care and treatment of your bearded dragon.



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