



Bearded Dragon Diet and Care Recommendations

GENERAL INFORMATION

The **Bearded Dragon** (*Pogona vitticeps*) is native to the rocky desert regions of central Australia. They are skilled climbers and are often found sunbathing on fence posts. They forage during the day for food, but like most desert animals they spend the hottest parts of the day hiding. The average life span is 8-10 years.

DIET

Protein: The diet should consist 80% crickets, gut-loaded with T-Rex Calcium Plus or ILF formula. Avoid mealworms and waxworms because they are high in fat. Phoenix worms and silkworms are nutritious alternatives, and are available by mail from various websites.

Vegetables: 20% of the diet should be dark leafy greens and vegetables. Good choices include collard greens, mustard greens, dandelion greens, chard, kale, parsley, bok choy, bell peppers, squash, tomatoes, and carrots.

Fruit: Fruit can be offered as an occasional treat. They enjoy a variety of berries, such as raspberries, blueberries, strawberries, and blackberries.

ENVIRONMENT

Bearded dragons should be kept in a cage that provides them with plenty of space to move around, climb, and hide.

Lighting: Bearded dragons require a specific wavelength of light called UVB. It is required for the proper absorption of calcium. We recommend using a full-spectrum bulb, the Reptisun 5.0 or 10.0, manufactured by ZooMed. Leave UVB bulbs on for 14 hours a day, and make sure that the bulb is not filtered through glass or plastic. These bulbs need to be changed every 6 months because their effectiveness as a UVB emitter decreases over time.

Heat: Ceramic heat bulbs are recommended for heating the enclosure. The temperature gradient should be 80-85F under the basking lamp and 70-75F in the coolest part of the enclosure. Two thermometers are recommended – one for the basking area under the lamp and one for the coolest area. Using thermometers in this way ensures a proper temperature gradient is maintained. Never use heat rocks or heating pads, which can cause burns.

Substrate: Use paper-based bedding, such as Carefresh or Yesterday's News. Coconut fiber is also okay. Avoid all types of sand, including calcisand. Sands can be ingested, causing blockages in the intestines.

Moisture: Wild bearded dragons live in arid, desert environments. Misting is not required. Provide a large dish of water for soaking and defecating, and change the water daily.

TURN OVER FOR MORE INFORMATION

MEDICAL CARE

An annual exam performed by a veterinarian is recommended for proper care. Your veterinarian can advise you if any additional testing is required.