



CAL ZOO'S REFERENCE SHEET



BEARDED DRAGONS

Latin name	<i>Pagona vitticeps</i> (Old name <i>Amphibolurus vitticeps</i>)	Maximum length	15 - 24 inches
Native to	Australia	Approximate life span	5 - 10 years

GENERAL INFORMATION

All Bearded Dragons supplied by California Zoological Supply are captive bred. Bearded Dragons are very docile lizards that get their name from the spiny scaled area that covers the throat. The male dragons will "puff" this area out as a sign of dominance and defense. This will be more common during the breeding season. Arm waving is just the opposite. It is a submissive behavior. Males tend to lose this behavior as adults while females tend to increase it, especially during the breeding season. Dominant dragons will seek the highest basking point in the enclosure. In order to show dominance, the dragon may sacrifice long exposure to the heat. You may see them try to cool off by keeping their mouths open. The message here is, it's better to look good than be comfortable. Sexual maturity is reached at about 15 months. During the breeding season, the throats of the males will darken to a solid black. This is a reliable indicator of sex. The throats of the female dragons tend to have gray scales. When males fight, they open their mouths, hiss and whip their tails. There are also Red-Headed Bearded Dragons on the market, unfortunately the heads will not turn red until they reach about 9 inches in length. Therefore it is difficult to distinguish Bearded Dragons from their Red-Headed counterparts. California Zoological Supply recommends you purchase a baby dragon with a minimum head to tail size of 5 - 6 inches. Anything smaller than this can be difficult to keep.

ENCLOSURE

A 10 - 20 gallon aquarium is sufficient for juveniles. As the lizards grow, increase the size of the enclosure. Adults should have plenty of room to remain active. A floor area of 1.5 - 2 feet square or larger is recommended for each adult. Males should not be kept together unless a very large enclosure is used as they tend to fight in confined spaces.

SUBSTRATE

Sand is your best choice. Avoid silica sand as it's fine dust is harmful to you and the lizards. You can obtain sanitized play sand at your local home center. Provide a layer of at least 2 inches. Keep the sand clean by sifting and removing any waste with a cat scooper used for cat boxes. Change the sand completely every 3 months, or sooner if needed. Decorate with Zoo Med REPTI-FLORA™, drift wood, grape vines or Zoo Med LIZARD LADDERS™.

TEMPERATURE & HUMIDITY

Overall daytime temperatures should be 85°F with a basking area of 90 - 95°F aimed at a branch or large rock on one end of the enclosure. Nighttime temperatures can drop to 75°F.

HEATING

Use a Zoo Med REPTITHERM® UNDER TANK HEATER (U.T.H.). For easy heat control use a Zoo Med REPTI-TEMP RHEOSTAT™ in conjunction with the U.T.H. Do not unplug the U.T.H. to control temperatures. Reptiles need to be able to regulate their body temperature, so a temperature gradient must be provided for. A basking area, consisting of a Zoo Med REPTI™ BASKING SPOT BULB and Zoo Med REPTICARE® ROCK HEATER, should be provided as well as an area where your animals can go to cool off. Always use a thermometer and humidity gauge in all reptile & amphibian enclosures.

LIGHTING

UVB spectrum lighting is a necessity for Bearded Dragons. The Zoo Med REPTI IGUANA LIGHT UVB310™ with its high UVB and UVA output is an excellent choice for daytime lighting. Very high UVB is essential for the dragons to synthesize vitamin D₃. All reptiles and amphibians need a photo period (light cycle). A plug in timer (for your lights only, do not use a timer for your heating devices) works well to develop a regular photo period of 12 hours of light and 12 hours of dark. Use a Zoo Med REPTICARE® CERAMIC HEAT EMITTER at night and during the day to keep the air temperature up. Reptiles and amphibians cannot see the red light spectrum, so a low wattage red bulb is ideal for night time viewing of your Bearded Dragons.

FOOD & WATER

Bearded Dragons are omnivorous (feeding on both live food and fruits & vegetables). Live food consists of crickets, small roaches, grasshoppers and wax worms. Small sized dragons should get 1 - 2 week old crickets, medium sized dragons should get 2 - 3 week old crickets and large sized dragons should get 4-5 week, nothing bigger. Pinkie mice can be fed to medium to large sized dragons occasionally. Do not feed a food item that is too big for the dragon (the crickets may impact the lizard and it may block off the intestinal track). An easy way to tell if the food is the proper size; The food item should not have a body length greater than the width of the dragon's head. Baby dragons to medium sized dragons should be fed every day while adults can eat every 2 - 3 days. Always feed your crickets assorted fruits and vegetables or a prepared commercial cricket diet 12 - 24 hours before feeding the crickets to your pets. Dust crickets with Zoo Med REPTIVITE® vitamins just before you feed them off. Dust also with a calcium supplement twice a week. All Bearded Dragons should get a mixture of vegetables chopped to bite size once a day in a separate dish. These vegetables should include; red leaf and green leaf lettuce, romaine lettuce, kale, mustard & collard greens, green beans, shredded carrots & banana squash, grapes and melons. You can also offer a small dish of Zoo Med canned ZOO MENU® TEGU/MONITOR FOOD once a week. Provide a shallow bowl with fresh de-chlorinated or spring water. Mist the dragons in the morning only for about 1 minute with de-chlorinated water.

NOTES

Always wash your hands before and immediately after handling reptiles and amphibians. Never leave live food long term with reptiles & amphibians. They can inflict severe harm, even kill your pet. If your animals take some time to eat or you feed them at night, leave a slice of potato, carrot or dry dog food for the live food items to eat. Your local pet shop is an ideal source for reptile and amphibian related books and supplies. Please make sure

you read and become familiar with any instructions provided with reptile support products you may purchase. . For further information on reptiles and amphibians we recommend you read *REPTILES MAGAZINE* and *THE VIVARIUM*. California Zoological Supply hopes you have enjoyed reading this reference sheet on Bearded Dragons. We hope that our guidelines will assist you with the care or possible purchase of your new pet.

This sheet may be copied in its entirety only.