

# PASSION *for* PETS

## Bearded Dragon Lizard Information Care Sheet



### Check list

- Tank or reptile enclosure minimum of 36"
- UVA / UVB light – 5.0 or 8.0
- Reflector
- Basking Heat Light
- Clamp Lamp or socket for heat globe
- Thermometer
- Thermostat ( optional)
- Heat Mat or Heat Rock
- Water Dish
- Food Dish
- Reptile Sand
- Bearded Dragon pellets
- Hide Log, Driftwood or Hide Cave
- Background

### SETTING UP YOUR TANK OR ENCLOSURE

Choose a position for you tank that is not exposed to drafts or excessive direct sunlight. Place the heat mat under one corner of your tank if you are not using a heat mat go to step 3. Fill the bottom of your enclosure with reptile sand or the like. Hang your clamp lamp or socket directly above the heat mat. If you are using a heat rock place this under the clamp lamp or socket. Insert the basking light and UVA UVB light into the socket and reflector. Sit the reflector on top of the tank and plug it into the power point and turn it on. Plug your heat mat / heat rock into the thermostat and set it to 30°C. Insert the probe into the tank just near the heat light but not directly under it. Plug the thermostat into the power point and turn it on. Place the hide log or cave at the opposite end to the heat source. Decorate the rest of the tank with some driftwood, if you are not using a heat rock ensure that there is some driftwood under the basking light. Fill your water dish with fresh water and place it in the tank away from the heat source. Place one dessert spoon of bearded dragon pellets into the food dish. Add a half of a teaspoon of either water or fruit juice to the pellets. Place the food dish into the tank away from the heat source. Attach the background to the outside of the rear panel of your tank.

### ARRIVING HOME

Your bearded dragon will be sent home in either a material bag or a container. Once you get home gently remove your bearded dragon from its bag/container and place him into his new home. Try not to disturb him for the rest of the day to give him a chance to settle in. Do not be alarmed if he doesn't eat that first day but he should definitely eat on his second day.

### PURCHASING YOUR BEARDED DRAGON

If you want to spend a lot of time with your bearded dragon sitting on you straight away it will be best for you to choose a sub-adult or adult dragon. The juvenile dragons are very fast and have the tendency to jump off you and end up in some sticky situations. For this reason they are best handled inside the tank until they mature and settle down. If you are purchasing two or more dragon to go together it is important to pick ones that are around the same size, larger dragons can pick on the smaller ones and eat all of the food. Our friendly staff will be able to assist you in your selection.

### SEXING YOUR BEARDED DRAGON

It is virtually impossible to sex a juvenile Bearded Dragon, if you must have a male or female you can arrange to swap it over if it turns out to be the wrong sex for you. Sub-Adult and adult bearded dragons can be sexed a lot easier. Male adults have a wider tail base and a wider coucal opening than the females. Males have a broader more triangular head than the females. When displaying the males have a darker beard.

### TEMPERATURE

Your tank needs to have a gradient heat. All heat sources need to be at one end of your tank, to allow your bearded dragon to regulate its body temperature by moving around the tank. The tank needs to be a minimum of 36" to have a definite cool end. Your tank needs to be around 30°C. Only have your basking light on during daylight hours but keep your heat mat/rock on at all times. It is best to have it connected to a thermostat as it will not go above the desired 30°C. If you do not have a thermostat you will need to keep a close eye on the thermometer and physically turn off the heat mat/rock if it goes above 33°C.

## **FEEDING YOUR BEARDED DRAGON**

Juveniles – Up until 4 months need to be fed crickets on a daily basis. When choosing the size of the cricket it is best that it is no larger than your dragon's mouth. Before feeding the crickets to your dragon you need to either feed the crickets with gut load to provide vitamins, minerals, calcium, fibre and fat or coat the crickets with repti-vite powder. 4 Months – Adult – Crickets should be fed twice a week (always gut load or coat first). Always provide fresh Bearded Dragon pellets (Juvenile formula for up to 1.5 years, Adult formula for 1.5 year plus) on a daily basis. Each day you should offer your bearded dragon greens, fruits or vegetables. The following are suitable food choices; Peas, chopped bok choy, chopped cos lettuce, corn kernels (creamed corn for younger dragons) mashed banana, finely diced apple, finely diced pear, mashed strawberries, milk thistle, thawed mixed vegetables (peas, corn & carrot mix) Sprouts, alfalfa, bean shoots and grated broccoli. Avoid spinach as it contains calcium binding oxalic acid. Make sure that the food is never larger than your dragon's mouth. Once in the stomach food pieces that are too large can cause your dragon to experience shock, tremors and hind leg paralysis or even death. Adult bearded Dragons can also be offered defrosted pinkie mice around once a fortnight as a protein rich treat. Variety and moderation is the rule to stick to with your dragon's diet.

## **LIFESPAN**

The keeping of Bearded Dragons is still a relatively new hobby therefore there have not as yet been reports of dragons living past the 6 – 7 year mark. By keeping your Bearded Dragon healthy and getting it out to exercise to avoid becoming obese you will increase your dragons lifespan.

## **BREEDING**

Bearded dragons readily breed in captivity. Make sure your dragons are at least 1.5 – 2 years before you put them together to breed. Healthy dragons produce healthy eggs, never breed from a female that is not in top condition, you will put both her and her eggs at risk. Courtship between dragons involves a lot of body language. The male will rapidly bob his head, when ready the female will bob her head in reply. The male will then hold the female by the back of the neck to mate with her. It can take up to seven weeks before the female lays her eggs. Generally once you can see the outline of eggs it will be another three weeks until she lays. The clutch can be between 6 – 25 eggs depending on the size of your dragon. An adult female can produce four to six clutches a year. Always increase food levels to a pregnant dragon. Top up on calcium rich foods. The female will choose a suitable site for her eggs, you must provide a suitable nesting site of deep sand as the female prefers to dig deep nests for her eggs. Incubation of the eggs generally takes around 60 days. Eggs can be removed for incubation, it is strongly suggested that you purchase a book on breeding Bearded Dragons to do this. The book will give you the right information about temperature, suitable containers, substrate and handling the eggs.

## **TANK MAINTAINENCE**

You will need to clean your dragon's tank on a weekly basis. I find a cat litter scoop is handy to remove the droppings, when the sand gets low or too dirty empty it all out. Use wipe out spray to disinfect your tank, wipe the tank dry then add new sand. You should clean the food and water dish on a daily basis. Always wash your hands after handling your dragon and use a cloth specifically for them rather than one you use for your dishes.

## **SHEDDING**

As your dragon grows it will shed its skin. Sometimes it will come off in large pieces other times it will come off in smaller pieces. It is important to provide your dragon with a rough surface to rub against to help it shed. Keep an eye on the end of your dragons tail and toes, if the skin doesn't properly shed it can cause infections or damage even the loss of toes. You can gently help remove the skin or even bath you dragon in luke warm water in a shallow container to help the skin shed.

## **HEALTH**

A healthy dragon is active and has a good body weight. Dragons store their fat in the base of their tails. If the tail bones are sticking out your dragon is seriously underweight.

It is a good practice to take your dragon to the same vet once a year for a pet check. Your vet will be able to notice any changes and detect any parasites.

Tip: Always soak wood in a container (deep enough to fully submerge it) for 24 hours before adding it to your tank. Add a drop of dishwashing liquid to the water, this will seal the top and drown any mites that may be in the wood. This is the main cause for your dragons becoming infested with mites.

Other than a yearly check up if you notice a change in your dragon's appetite, droppings or activity levels consult your vet straight away, they will tell you if you need to bring your dragon in to be checked.

## **CONTACT US**

If you have any further questions please ring or come in and see us for any help and advice.

[www.passionforpets.com.au](http://www.passionforpets.com.au)