



Husbandry Requirements for Bearded Dragon.

Temperature Gradient:

All reptiles need a temperature gradient in their vivarium: i.e. one end cooler than the other so that they can then select where they are most comfortable to achieve their Preferred Body Temperature (PBT). Heat lamps should therefore be placed at one end of the vivarium not on the side.

Bearded Dragon temperature range: 25 – 40 °C (21°C at night).

UVB light: This is advised for Bearded Dragons particularly if at risk of or showing signs of Metabolic Bone Disease. Bulbs should provide 12% UVB and need to be changed every 3 - 6 months.

Photoperiod: Lights can be kept on for 12 hours a day leaving a 12 hour 'night' period but it is even better if the photoperiod mimics their natural habitat in Australia.

Diet: Bearded dragons are unusual in that they are insectivores when young and should be fed small insects such as small hoppers or crickets 2 – 3 times per week dusted with calcium powder. When older (300g plus) the diet becomes more herbivore and at least 85% of the adult diet should comprise leafy greens – the balance being hoppers or crickets.

Neutrobal A calcium/vitamin D supplement) should also be given once a week. Note that Vitamin D can be toxic at high levels and any increase in this dose should be discussed with your vet.

Water: Provide a large bowl of water at the cool end of the vivarium with easy access in and out – this will also keep humidity levels at a good level although Bearded Dragons only require 30-40% humidity which is much the same as household levels. It is especially important when shedding to provide good levels of water to bask in and keep humidity levels slightly higher than normal.

Environmental enrichment:

A hide should always be provided – preferably two, one at the warm end of the vivarium and one at the cool end so the dragon can use whichever is at the most comfortable temperature.

Rocks and branches to climb through are also good enrichment and provide an abrasive surface to start shedding. Hot rocks immediately under the heat lamp or hide are not a good idea as they can get too hot and cause burns.

Newspaper is a good floor lining or substrate as it is easy to clean and to monitor urinary and faecal levels produced.

