The Bearded Dragon Guide
Bearded Dragon Diet, Habitat, Health, & More

The Complete Care Guide for Bearded Dragons
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Cheat Sheet

Bearded dragons are among the easiest reptiles to care for, however they are still considered exotic pets and have specific requirements that need to be met/maintained in order for them to stay healthy. This cheat sheet was designed to save you time by listing many of the things that bearded dragon owners commonly forget.

Bearded Dragon Temperatures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Temperature Type</th>
<th>Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Daytime Tank Temperature (Cool Side)</td>
<td>85-95°F (29-43°C)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daytime Tank Temperature (Hot Side)</td>
<td>95-105°F (35-40°C)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basking Rock Temperature (Air Temp, Not Surface Temp)</td>
<td>105-110°F (37-43°C)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nighttime Tank Minimum Temperature</td>
<td>70°F (21°C)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bathwater (for bathing bearded dragons)</td>
<td>95-100°F (35-37°C)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tank Humidity Level</td>
<td>35-40%</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Bearded Dragon Feeding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food Source</th>
<th>Diet Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adult Bearded Dragons Food Sources</td>
<td>70-80% Greens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young Bearded Dragon Food Sources</td>
<td>70-80% Bugs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vitamin D3 and Calcium Supplement (Baby Bearded Dragons)</td>
<td>Daily Dose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vitamin D3 and Calcium Supplement (Juvenile Bearded Dragons)</td>
<td>One Dose 3-4 Times per Week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vitamin D3 and Calcium Supplement (Adult Bearded Dragons)</td>
<td>One Dose Per Week</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bearded Dragon Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Remove Fecal Matter and Urea from the Tank</td>
<td>Every Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Replace Uneaten or Stale Vegetables</td>
<td>Every Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clean the Food and Water Dishes with Warm Soapy Water</td>
<td>Every Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Replace or Clean Any Loose Substrate (Sand/Wood/Etc.)</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clean out the Bearded Dragon's Tank</td>
<td>Once Every Month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change UV Bulbs</td>
<td>Every 6 Months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vet Check for Parasites (ideally before brumation)</td>
<td>Annually</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction

Congratulations on purchasing The Bearded Dragon Guide! This manual will take you by the hand and will show you everything you need to do to properly care for any bearded dragon.

If you are new to reptiles or bearded dragons, that's fantastic! Not only will you be introduced to one of the most popular reptile pets, but you will learn everything you need to know to keep, raise, or breed healthy and long living bearded dragons.

If you already have a bearded dragon, this guide will show you how to make sure you're doing everything correctly so your bearded dragon will bond more closely to you, be happier, and have a longer healthier life.

Why Bearded Dragons Make Good Pets
The bearded dragon has been a favorite among herpetologists ever since they became popular in the mid to late 1980's. Their calm temperament, non-aggressive behavior, and low maintenance makes them ideal pets for experienced and non-experienced reptile owners. They are large enough that they can be easily found (if they escape) and small enough that they don't require building a custom tank or enclosure.

Bearded Dragon History

Where Are Bearded Dragons From

Even though bearded dragons are among the most popular reptile pets in the world, they are all originally from Australia which is where they can still be naturally found today. There are 8 species of bearded dragons and between them they can be found throughout 60-75% of Australia with the highest populations in arid, dry, desert/semi-desert regions.

What Do Bearded Dragons Eat
The bearded dragon's diet generally consists of insects, vegetables, fruit, and other edible plants. They will eat just about anything that wiggles in front of them, so owners need to be careful and make sure they don't eat any bugs that can harm them.

Since beardies are from dry, arid, desert regions they have evolved to be very efficient with water. In nature, they will get most of their water from dew drops, raindrops on plants, or from small streams with moving water. It is sometimes difficult to get some bearded dragons to drink from bowls or cups because they are not familiar with standing water in their natural habitat.
Temperature and Humidity
In the Australian deserts, woodlands, and coasts where bearded dragons are found have summer temperature ranges from 98-102°F and winter temperatures ranges between 61-77°F. To mimic the temperatures of the bearded dragon's natural habitat you will use a basking light to heat one side of the tank (so the other side will be 10-20°F cooler), this way your beardie will be able to choose between temperatures.

The humidity of their native habitat is fairly low and is generally between 35-40% humidity. You will need to match this humidity level in their tank as well.

Species of Bearded Dragons

Australia is home to many different species of bearded dragons (Pogona) and each type of bearded dragon is specially adapted to live in its environment. The list below goes over each different species of bearded dragon.

**Pogona Barbata – Eastern Bearded Dragon**
The Pogona Barbata can be found in dry wooded areas within Eastern, South, and Central Australia. To cope with their habitat they are excellent climbers and will sometimes spend large portions of their day in trees.

They are grey-black colored and can grow up to 24 inches in length which makes them one of the larger bearded dragon species. Their diet consists of mostly insects, flowers, and fruit but they will also eat smaller lizards.

The Eastern Bearded Dragon is more aggressive than other bearded dragons and the males are very territorial. They are known to expand their beard (bearding) more frequently than other bearded dragons when threatened.

**Pogona Henrylawsoni – Lawson's Dragon**
The Pogona Henrylawsoni is a much smaller bearded dragon that lives in dry, rocky, arid locations (mostly desert environments) in western and central Queensland. They are sometimes called "Dwarf Bearded Dragons" because they rarely reach twelve inches in length.

They were named after the Australian writer and poet Henry Lawson.
Pogona Microlepidota – Kimberly Bearded Dragon
The Pogona Microlepidota is one of the smallest species of bearded dragons with a max length of 4-6 inches. These dragons are so rare that very little is known about them besides their habitat which is along the coast and in the woodlands of Northern Kimberley Australia.

Pogona Minor Minor
Pogona Minor Minor lizards are found in dry rocky areas and woodlands within Western or Central Australia. They grow to as much as 18 inches in length and have a greenish color to allow them to blend into woody environments. They are another species of rare bearded dragon and because of this their natural behavior is unknown.

Pogona Minor Minima – Western Bearded Dragon
Pogona Minor Minima are rare bearded dragons and are normally found in dry woodlands along Western Australia and on the Houtman Albrohos Islands. They are smaller than the Pogona Minor Minor and will only reach 12 inches in length. Their behavior is mostly unknown because of their rareness.

Pogona Minor Mitchelli – Mitchells Bearded Dragon
The Pogona Minor Mitchelli is another rare bearded dragon and are found in semi-tropical woodlands and deserts within North Western Australia. They can grow to 18 inches in length and their behavior, for the most part, is unknown because of their rareness.

Pogona Nullarbor – Nullarbor Bearded Dragon/Banded Bearded Dragon
The Pogona Nullarbor can grow to 14 inches and has one of the smallest geographical ranges of any of the bearded dragons. They can only be found in the flat brush environments of South-Central and Southwest Australia specifically around the Nullarbor Plain region. Two defining characteristics include white stripes along its back and spiny sides.
Pogona Vitticeps – Central Bearded Dragon
The Pogona Vitticeps is one of the most common bearded dragons in the world due to its popularity as a pet. The chances are that if you're planning on getting a bearded dragon it will be a Pogona Vitticeps. They can be found in dry brush, forests, and desert environments throughout Central Australia.

The Central Bearded Dragon is one of the largest species of bearded dragons and can reach 24 inches in length. They are available in a wide variety of colors including brown, red, grey, yellow, white, orange, and blue, however there are no green bearded dragons (even though some bearded dragons will have green coloring when they are young, it will often fade and change to a different color when they become adults).

Bearded Dragons Today

How they got Here
Since Australia banned exporting all animals in the 1960's, it is believed that most of the bearded dragons in North America today were bred from beardies that were smuggled out of Australia from 1970-1990. As the bearded dragon’s popularity grew, selective breeding began among bearded dragon owners. Now there are so many bearded dragons being bred that the demand for smuggled bearded dragons declined significantly after the early 1990's.

Bearded Dragon Traits
Bearded dragons are now available in many different sizes and colors thanks to selective breeding among bearded dragon enthusiasts. If you are planning on purchasing a bearded dragon from a breeder, you should familiarize yourself with the words they use to accurately describe the traits.

Normal – A bearded dragon bred from two bearded dragons with different traits.

Hypo – A bearded dragon bred from two bearded dragons with the hypomelanism trait. The offspring is usually lighter in color and generally lack dark colors in their skin, eyes, and nails.

Trans – A bearded dragon bred from two bearded dragons with translucent skin traits. This makes their skin appear slightly translucent/see-through. Most trans bearded dragons will have solid black eyes.

Hypo Trans – A bearded dragon that was bred in a way to lack dark colors and have slightly translucent skin.

Het Hypo – A bearded dragon that carries the hypomelanism trait, but doesn't display it visually. If this bearded dragon produces offspring some of the offspring will show the hypomelanism trait and others may not. Of course, this also depends on the traits the bearded dragon's mate.
Het Trans – A bearded dragon that carries the translucent trait, but doesn't display it visually. If this bearded dragon produces offspring some of the offspring will show the translucent trait, while others may not (this also depends on the traits of the bearded dragon's mate).

Double Het – A bearded dragon that carries both the hypomelanism and translucent traits, yet does not display them visually. Their offspring may or may not show these traits (depending on the traits of the bearded dragon’s mate).

Hypo Het Trans – A bearded dragon that shows the hypomelanism trait, yet carries (and doesn't display) the translucent traits.

Trans Het Hypo – A bearded dragon that shows the translucent trait, yet carries (and doesn't display) the hypomelanism trait.

Types of Bearded Dragons
There are many different types of bearded dragons. If you are considering purchasing a bearded dragon from the breeder, the chances are that he/she will be offering one or more of the following bearded dragon types.

German Giant Bearded Dragons – A German giant bearded dragon is bred by mating dragons that are larger in size than average bearded dragons. By doing this with every generation, they have developed a breed that is 50% larger than normal bearded dragons. These bearded dragons come in a variety of colors.

Leatherback Bearded Dragons – Leatherback dragons have a mutated gene which prevents their scales from growing to full size. Instead of having regular sized scales, they have a large number of smaller scales which makes the bearded dragon feel and appear smoother. Leatherback dragons also have more exotic coloring since the smaller scales allows more coloring detail to be displayed.

Silkback Bearded Dragons – Silkback dragons are bred when you mate two leatherback bearded dragons. The end results is a dragon with scales so small that they appear to be scaleless and look and feel as if they are covered with soft skin.

Bearded Dragon Colors
Thanks to selective breeding, bearded dragons come in a multitude of colors. Below is an overview of many of the bearded dragon colors available.

Red Bearded Dragons – Red bearded dragons are bred by mating two beardies with a high amount of red coloring. With each generation of offspring the red coloring becomes deeper and more prominent, until the end results is an extremely deep red colored dragon.

The following names are used to describe solid-red bearded dragons:

- Red bearded dragon
- Blood-red bearded dragon
• Ruby red bearded dragon

The following names are used to describe bearded dragons with red coloring mixed in:
• Sandfire red bearded dragon
• Orange bearded dragon
• Citrus tiger bearded dragon
• Sunburst bearded dragon
• Tangerine bearded dragon

Yellow Bearded Dragons – Yellow bearded dragons are bred by mating two beardies with a high amount of yellow coloring. With each generation of offspring the yellow coloring becomes brighter and more prominent until the end results is an extremely yellow bearded dragon.

The following names are used to describe predominantly yellow bearded dragons:
• Gold bearded dragon
• Lemon fire bearded dragon
• Citrus bearded dragon
• Sandfire gold bearded dragon
• Yellow bearded dragon

The following names are used to describe bearded dragons with a mixture of yellow in their color:
• Sandfire red bearded dragon
• Orange bearded dragon
• Citrus tiger bearded dragon
• Sunburst bearded dragon
• Tangerine bearded dragon

White Bearded Dragons – White bearded dragons are bred by mating beardies that are whiter or paler in coloring to produce new generations of dragons that are predominantly white.

The following names are used to describe mostly white colored bearded dragons:
• Albino bearded dragon
• Snow bearded dragon

Blue, Black, and Purple Bearded Dragons – These colors do exist, but are extremely rare and are the results of careful planning from experienced breeders.

Standard Bearded Dragon Colors – The previously mentioned color patterns are rare and are more expensive to get. So most people will usually get a standard colored bearded dragon. Most bearded dragons will be one of or a combination of the following colors:
• Light tan
Bearded Dragon General Information

General Anatomy

Like most reptiles, bearded dragons are cold blooded which means their body temperature depends upon the environment they are surrounded by. As a cold blooded animal, they rely on the sun's heat to keep warm and have evolved to spend enormous amounts of time in the sun without dehydrating, which is important because their habitat is dry desert-like environments.

Similar to other desert dwelling animals, they are extremely efficient with water and their body has adapted to show this. They have the same organs other reptiles and mammals have (heart, lungs, intestines, etc.), but their organs have evolved to conserve as much water as possible to remain hydrated. Their bumpy scales are also aligned to catch and hold water droplets (from dew or rain) between the bumps so the bearded dragon can easily drink the water off their body. This is why many bearded dragon owners will "mist" their bearded dragons with a spray bottle for hydration.

How Big Do Bearded Dragons Get

One of the most common questions asked by potential bearded dragon owners is "how big do they get?". Bearded dragons can be anywhere from 12 to 24 inches in length and are sometimes bred to be larger or smaller (depending on the breeder). The average length is generally 16-20 inches for most beardies purchased to be pets. The largest bearded dragons are called German Giants and regularly reach 22-24 inches in length.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Length Range</th>
<th>Average Length</th>
<th>Max Length</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12-24 Inches</td>
<td>16-20 Inches</td>
<td>24 Inches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-60 Centimeters</td>
<td>40-50 Centimeters</td>
<td>60 Centimeters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2 Feet</td>
<td>1.3-1.6 Feet</td>
<td>2 Feet</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Weight

Bearded dragons will weigh as little as 1/10th of an ounce (2 ½ to 3 grams) when they are born. As adults they can weigh as much as ¼ of a pound (250 grams) or more for German Giant or other large-bred bearded dragons.
Bearded Dragon Average Lifespan

Bearded dragons are fairly hardy reptiles, which is one of the many reasons why they make such good pets. The average lifespan of bearded dragons depends on many factors including health, diet, and environment. Below are the different age ranges you can expect.

3 to 5 Years – The maximum age bearded dragons will reach in the wild. This is also the likely age range for captive bearded dragons that are neglected, malnourished, or unhealthy.

5 to 12 Years – This is the average lifespan of most pet bearded dragons. This is the age range you should expect if you keep your bearded dragon’s environment the ideal size, temperature, and humidity as well as frequently monitor your bearded dragon’s health, diet, and nutrition and have veterinary checkups to make sure he/she is in the best condition.

12 to 14 Years – This is the maximum lifespan of some of the oldest bearded dragons kept as pets. Bearded dragons that reach these ages did so with superior genetics and a knowledgeable owner.

14+ Years - It is extremely rare for bearded dragons to exceed 14 years, however there are some cases where people claim their bearded dragon lived to be as old as 19. Unfortunately, since most bearded dragons do not have an official record of their birth these cases cannot be proven.

How to Tell the Gender of a Bearded Dragon

It is not uncommon for owners to misidentify a younger bearded dragon’s gender. This is because bearded dragons generally don’t develop gender specific characteristics until they have reached sexual maturity or are 7-8 inches (18-20 cm) in length.

Methods Not to Use
There are a lot of “shortcuts” that people use to quickly determine the gender of a bearded dragon. However, these shortcuts don’t always work and shouldn’t be relied on.

Size of the Bearded Dragon – Since males are generally larger, many people will assume that a larger bearded dragon is male. Unfortunately, size can also be determined by health, diet, the environment, and genetics which means that in some cases females will be larger than a male.

Behavioral Traits – Some people say that males will turn their beards black more frequently and females will submit faster than males. However, since both genders will turn their beards black and will submit, there is no easy way to determine the accuracy of this.

Head Size – Males will generally have a broader head than female bearded dragons. But, if you only have one bearded dragon or if you don’t know the age of your bearded dragons this technique is useless.
**Tail Thickness** – Females will have a thinner tail at their base and males will have a thicker tail. Although, similar to head size, you won’t be able to determine if your bearded dragon tail’s girth is large or small without having other bearded dragons to compare it to. Adult bearded dragon’s will also have a larger tail than younger beardies, so an adult female’s tail will be larger than the tail of a younger male.

**Best Way to Determine Your Bearded Dragon’s Sex (without Being Too Intrusive)**
The most accurate way to determine the gender of your bearded dragon (without going to the vet) is by looking for gender identifying characteristics near the base of your bearded dragon's tail.

To do this, very gently lift your bearded dragon’s tail (be careful not to lift above a 90° angle) and focus your attention on the area above the vent. If your bearded dragon is not yet sexually mature, you most likely will not be able to determine their gender yet (instead you will need to wait until they have become more developed). If your bearded dragon is sexually mature you will notice the following characteristics:

**Male Bearded Dragons**

The image below represents the anatomy of a male bearded dragon. You can see that males will have two bumps (D) on either side of their tail with a dimple between them. Sometimes it can be difficult to see the two bumps, especially if your bearded dragon is still fairly young.

This image depicts a male bearded dragon facing away with his tail lifted in the air to reveal his gender specific characteristics.

- **A** – Underside of Tail
- **B** – Vent
- **C** – Hind/Rear Legs
- **D** – Male Specific Characteristics
Female Bearded Dragons

The below image represents a female bearded dragon. Females will have a single raised bump in the middle of their tail and it is usually slightly above their vent. Most bearded dragons will appear to be female when they’re young, but when males reach sexual maturity their distinguishing characteristics will become more visible.

The image to the left depicts a female bearded dragon facing away with her tail raised in the air to display her female distinguishing characteristics.

A – Underside of Tail
B – Vent
C – Hind/Rear Legs
D – Female Specific Characteristics
Bearded Dragons as Pets

Before you get a bearded dragon it's important that you make sure they will be the right pet for you. Bearded dragons make great pets, but if you cannot afford the time, costs, or responsibilities of keeping a bearded dragon, you should look for another pet and let the bearded dragon go to a family that can properly take care of them.

How Difficult Are Bearded Dragons to Keep

As far as pets go, bearded dragons are fairly easy to keep. They don't need daily walks, they can be left unmonitored, and they are one of the most tame reptiles so aggression is normally not an issue (however, as with all animals they can sometimes be cranky). They also require very little space and are beautiful to look at not to mention fascinating to friends and family not used to seeing reptile pets.

There are, however, a few areas of concern for those who are not experienced with keeping reptiles as pets. These subjects have been highlighted below:

Environment
Even though bearded dragons are popular pets, they are exotic animals and require a specialized diet and environment. Their enclosure will need to be heated between 85°-110°F (30°-43°C) during the day and should not get below 70°F (21°C) at night. This will require the use of heat lamps and possibly an Under Tank Heater (UTH).

» See Recommended Heat Lamps
» See Recommended Under Tank Heaters

Diet
Bearded dragons also require a specific diet. Adults will eat mostly fresh vegetables with some insects while younger bearded dragons will eat mostly insects with some vegetables. Bugs found in your yard or purchased at bait shops can occasionally contain pesticides and parasites, so they cannot be fed to bearded dragons. You will have to purchase feeder insects from pet stores or from the internet to feed to your bearded dragon. The vegetables can be purchased (fresh only) at your local grocery store or grown at home.

» See Recommended Feeder Insects

Health
Bearded dragons are very healthy lizards. They will occasionally require a checkup at your vet (for parasites and other illnesses) once every year or sooner if you suspect there is something wrong.
Responsibilities
The daily responsibilities for bearded dragons are not too difficult and can easily fit into anyone’s schedule. Below are the responsibilities to keep bearded dragons happy:

- Turn on/off their tank light and heat lamp – you can purchase timers to do this automatically so you don't accidentally forget.
- Feeding your bearded dragon – you will need to provide fresh fruit, vegetables, and greens on a daily basis as well as provide insects for your bearded dragon to eat. You cannot leave insects in the tank with the bearded dragon because the bugs will burrow into the tank and hide or nip on your bearded dragon’s tail. So you will need to remove any uneaten insects after 10-15 minutes.
- Bathing – You should bathe your bearded dragon to keep them clean and to hydrate them. This involves putting your beardie in a pool of shallow warm-hot water (95-100°F). It is recommended to make their bathwater about as deep as their chest.
- Cleaning – You will need to clean your bearded dragon’s tank at least once per month or sooner if it becomes dirty.

See Recommended Timers

Bearded Dragon Costs

Bearded dragons are not the cheapest pets. You will find that their diet alone will be the biggest expense of keeping a bearded dragon. Below are the average costs associated with keeping a bearded dragon:

Vet Costs – It will cost anywhere from $60-$70 for a regular checkup at your local vet. Normally bearded dragons will only need a checkup once per year, but if your bearded dragon is sick, needs x-rays, or any other services it will be more expensive.

Lighting Costs – As far as your electric bill goes, it will cost anywhere from $0.30-$0.50/Day to power the heat lamps and UV lights needed for your bearded dragon. You can lower your energy costs by using ceramic bulbs or other energy efficient lights. You will also need to replace your UV bulbs every 6 months which costs anywhere from $20-$30.

Diet Costs – Bearded dragons will require fresh vegetables on a daily basis. Vegetables are fairly inexpensive, but feeder insects can get a bit pricy. Most bearded dragon owners spend anywhere from $50-$100/month on both vegetables and insects for their bearded dragon. Some bearded dragon owners will offset this cost by purchasing an insect colony and breeding the insects themselves at home. Generally a colony of Dubia roaches will provide an endless supply of healthy insects for a bearded dragon for around $10/month.
Is A Bearded Dragon the Right Pet for You?

Many reptile experts agree that bearded dragons make great pets for both first-time and experienced reptile owners. Their tameness, attraction, and easy care makes them an ideal choice for any pet lover, but if you cannot handle the responsibilities of feeding and bathing your bearded dragon or if you cannot afford the monthly costs to feed and take care of your beardie; it would probably be best for you to get a pet that can fit into your time and budget.

Besides the costs of lighting and food requirements, the next biggest issue most owners face with bearded dragons is their space requirements. Adult bearded dragons will need a wide shallow tank that is at least 75 gallons, which can sometimes be an issue for people who are limited in space.

Buying a Bearded Dragon

What Age Bearded Dragon Should You Get

One question you'll ask when choosing a bearded dragon is "how old of a dragon should I get?". While this choice is entirely up to you, there are some guidelines below that should help make sure you're getting the right age for your needs.

How to Tell How Old a Bearded Dragon Is

Not every bearded dragon is the same size at the same time. Some beardies develop quicker than others so there's no easy way to determine the exact age of a bearded dragon unless the breeder/seller has documented the date of birth. However, if their date of birth is not recorded you can roughly guess the age based on their size.

The below chart gives a rough estimate on a bearded dragon's age based on their size. This chart's data came from the measurements of over 50 bearded dragons that had their date of birth documented.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Length (Inches)</th>
<th>Age (months)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Smallest-Largest</td>
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<tr>
<td>3-4 in.</td>
<td>0-1 month</td>
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<tr>
<td>5-9 in.</td>
<td>2 months</td>
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<tr>
<td>8-11 in.</td>
<td>3 months</td>
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<tr>
<td>9-12 in.</td>
<td>4 months</td>
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<tr>
<td>11-16 in.</td>
<td>5 months</td>
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<tr>
<td>11-18 in.</td>
<td>6 months</td>
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<tr>
<td>13-20 in.</td>
<td>8 months</td>
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<tr>
<td>16-22 in.</td>
<td>12 months</td>
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Young Bearded Dragons
Younger bearded dragons are probably the most popular bearded dragons people buy. Since they are young, people will bond better with them and there’s less risk of getting a bearded dragon with a long history of health issues, poor handling, or bad habits. Getting a younger bearded dragon will also give it more time to bond to you and its surroundings. If you plan on handling your bearded dragon, getting one at a young age will give it more time to get used to be picked up, carried, and touched by people.

There are also disadvantages of a young bearded dragon. Younger beardies are more fragile and have to be handled more carefully. Because of this bearded dragons younger than 4 months have a higher mortality rate and their diet and environment need to be monitored closely. Their diet consists of mostly insects and they will need to be fed multiple times each day, which can quickly get expensive. They will also grow rapidly their first 12 months which means you may need to buy a larger tank with bigger lights and heat lamps. It's also very difficult to tell what gender a younger bearded dragon is. So there will be no easy way to tell if a young bearded is a male or female.

If you plan on getting a younger bearded dragon it is recommended to create a daily routine to make sure you don’t forget a feeding, overlook turning the light on/off, or do anything else forgetful that can be detrimental to the bearded dragon’s health.

If you do decide to purchase a younger bearded dragon, it is recommended to pick a larger sized bearded dragon. It has been proven that generally larger bearded dragons are more healthy and have a smaller risk of becoming ill or dying before adulthood than smaller similar-aged bearded dragons.

Adult Bearded Dragons
Adult bearded dragons are less fragile, have a more stable diet, and you will know what sex they are. You also do not need to worry about purchasing a larger tank (since they are close to their full size) and their coloring will not change.

However, adult dragons are generally more expensive and you will not always know if they've had a positive history with previous owners. Bearded dragons that have been neglected can develop traits that may make them difficult to handle.

If you plan on getting an adult bearded dragon it is recommended to learn as much about their history as you can. You should also try to spend enough time around him/her that you can verify he/she doesn't have any aggression or behavioral issues that could become a problem.

What to Expect at Different Ages

Bearded dragons go through many stages of life. Below will help you to better understand what to expect at a particular age/stage in a bearded dragon’s life.

From Birth to 8 Inches in Length
This stage of a bearded dragon's life is when they will be rapidly growing. They will have a huge appetite during this time and will eat a diet of mostly insects (for the protein and fats needed for their growth). They will be so hungry that they will sometimes attack other baby bearded dragons when there is not
enough food (which is why it’s best to always separate bearded dragons). Many owners may be concerned their bearded dragon isn't eating enough vegetables at this stage, but the yolk they fed on in the egg generally provides enough vitamins and minerals that you shouldn't be concerned until they are a bit older.

From 8 Inches to Adulthood
During this stage their diet will change and they will start to eat more vegetables than previously (although some beardies can be difficult to feed veggies to). Their growth rate will still be rapid as they will continue to grow until they reach their max length. Generally bearded dragons will become less aggressive towards other beardies at this stage and sexual maturity will begin to set in when they are around 12-16 inches in length.

Adult Bearded Dragons (4-6 Years of Age)
Adult bearded dragons will slowly become less sexually aggressive. Nearly all bearded dragons have stopped growing (in length) by this stage.

Mature Bearded Dragons (6+ Years of Age)
Mature bearded dragons will have a decreased appetite as well as little to no desire for reproduction. Since bearded dragons get most of their water from the food they eat, it is recommended to make sure they stay properly hydrated when they reach this age.

What Gender Should You Get

Another thing some people may be concerned about is gender. So should you get a male or a female bearded dragon? Use the information below to decide what's best for you.

If you are getting a young bearded dragon it will be very difficult for you to know the gender of the dragon you’re buying. Even though there are visible physical differences between male and female beardies, these changes don’t become noticeable until they reach sexual maturity. So if you’re getting a young bearded dragon you will not always know which gender you are getting. The only way you can determine the gender (without being too intrusive) is if the breeder incubated the bearded dragon eggs to produce all male or all female beardies (you can read more about this in the breeding section).

Male Bearded Dragons
Males, like most animals, will be bigger than females for the most part. So if you want a larger bearded dragon, getting a male would be a good step in that direction. Males are also more brightly colored than females, so if you want a beardie with the most vivid coloring you should lean more towards a male. Many owners and breeders state that male bearded dragons seem to have more character and personality than females, but of course there is no way this can be proven.

The disadvantages of males are that they tend to be more aggressive than females. If you have or plan on having more than one bearded dragon, you cannot put two males in the same cage because there's a
good chance they'll become very aggressive towards each other. However, as males get older they do become less aggressive and some breeders may be able to temporarily keep two males within the same large walk-in enclosure without any issues.

Female Bearded Dragons
Females are usually calmer and less aggressive than males. Their colors are not as vivid as males; however that doesn't mean they are dull and can still be very vibrant. Since females are less aggressive it means that they can sometimes share an enclosure with another female bearded. However, keep in mind that is recommended to have separate enclosures for each bearded dragon.

Females will start laying eggs when they reach sexual maturity even if there are no male bearded dragons around. So you will need to monitor her health when she is gravid or laying eggs.

Should You Get More Than One Bearded Dragon
The decision of getting multiple bearded dragons should be taken seriously. Most bearded dragons cannot live in the same enclosure as others (although some females can live together and males can be with females for breeding purposes), so they will each require their own tank. You will also need to consider the costs of feeding and taking care of multiple beardies, not to mention the extra time and attention each additional bearded dragon will need.

If you are interested in having a family of bearded dragons or breeding beardies, then getting more than one bearded dragon will most likely be your goal. Just remember these dragons will depend on you so it's important that you make sure you have the time and resources required.

If you are having multiple bearded dragons at the same house, you should quarantine any new bearded dragons before introducing them to each other. This quarantine period should be 60 days and during this time period you will want to monitor them to make sure they don't have any health issues that could be transmitted to your other bearded dragons. It's also recommended to get the new bearded dragon tested for parasites at your local vet. Many illnesses can easily be transmitted between bearded dragons, so this simple step will help reduce the risk of having multiple dragons ill at the same time.

Where Can You Get a Bearded Dragon?
When getting a bearded dragon you will have many pet stores and breeders to choose from. But there are several other places that you can get bearded dragons for any price range (sometimes even free). So this section will cover all the places you can find bearded dragons.

Not every pet store will sell bearded dragons, but it's important that you keep your options open even if it's difficult to find bearded dragons in your area. You don't want to rush into buying a bearded dragon that may have been neglected or has health issues, because not only will that support the
company/individual that's selling them, but you also risk your bearded dragon having health issues or
dying prematurely.

Pet Stores
For most people, pet stores are the first place they think to visit to buy a bearded dragon. They are
convenient and sometimes offer complete starter kits for bearded dragons. However, if you're looking
for a bearded dragon with vivid coloring or if you want a specific type of bearded dragon, then pet stores will not
have the selection you're looking for. There's also the concern that bearded dragons in pet stores are
not being managed by someone experienced with bearded dragons, so they may not be as healthy as
the bearded dragons you purchase from a breeder.

Breeders
Bearded dragon breeders generally have several years of experience with raising and breeding bearded
dragons, so there's a good chance these dragons will have received the care and attention needed to be
healthy. Breeders also have a larger variety of bearded dragons you choose from. They will offer more
exotic colors and sizes than pet stores. The drawback of buying from a breeder is that their dragons are
more expensive than other places; however you're paying for an experienced professional to breed and
raise a unique type of dragon so many people think it's worth the price.

Reptile Rescues
If you have experience with reptiles and want to better the life of a possibly neglected animal than a
reptile rescue would be a wonderful place to get a bearded dragon. Many people do not have the time
or patience to take proper care of their bearded dragon so they give them to a local rescue. You can
find many loving and exotic bearded dragons at rescues and when you rescue a bearded dragon you are making
room for another animal to be saved by the rescue. Unfortunately, rescues may not be the best choice
for people who are inexperienced with reptile or bearded dragon care. Since many of the dragons have
been rescued from unwanted homes there is a chance they were malnourished or neglected and may
need the care and handling that only an experienced reptile owner could give. For a list of reptile
rescues we recommend The Bearded Dragon’s Reptile Rescue List.

Classified Ads
Classifieds are another great place that many people overlook when getting a pet. Students, people
who are moving, or people who cannot care for their bearded dragon will often put a classified ad in the
local newspaper or on Craigslist. Many times you can get bearded dragons at extremely low prices and
it's not unusual to find entire habitats (tanks, lighting, etc.) for sale with the bearded dragon. If you're
looking for a bargain and aren't too picky about the bearded dragon you get, then classified ads are a
great place to look.

Reptile Expos
Reptile expos attract experts from all across the country and are a great place to go to learn more about
bearded dragons or to buy a bearded dragon. Many breeders will have stands at the expo and will be
more than happy to give you a great deal on the exact bearded dragon that you're wanting. Another
good thing about expos is that people who are interested in reptiles will often adopt bearded dragons
(and other reptiles) from friends and family members who cannot care for them. These people care
about reptiles and are always looking for a good home so if you mingle and talk to others there's a good
chance that you can find someone who can get you a healthy bearded dragon at a great price.
Humane Societies and Animal Shelters
Most shelters will forfeit any reptiles to a reptile rescue, but sometimes reptile rescues cannot accept other animals or the humane society may have a staff member with reptile experience. Because of this, it's always smart to check with local humane societies and animal shelters to see if they have any bearded dragons available for adoption. Keep in mind that since these are rescued bearded dragons, they may have a history of neglect and require more care and attention than healthier beardies.

What Type Bearded Dragon Should You Get
There are many different types and colors of bearded dragons available, so which one should you get? This is entirely up to you. There is no major difference in care or handling between normal bearded dragons and selectively bred bearded dragons.

Signs of a Healthy Bearded Dragon
You will want to choose the healthiest bearded dragon before you bring him/her home. Fortunately, there are a few easy things to look for to quickly determine the health of a bearded dragon.

Signs of a Healthy Bearded Dragon:
• It will keep its head lifted and will not be lethargic.
• It will be alert and will notice you when you approach him/her.
• No major injuries or wounds, if there were past injuries they have healed properly.
• They move freely and without difficulty.
• Their eyes, nostrils, vent, and mouth appear clean and healthy.
• When standing still they appear well balanced and sturdy.
• They have all their body parts and are not missing legs, tail, or several toes.
• They appear well fed and have rounded body contours.
• Their hip or spine bones are not clearly visible (from lack of food).
• Their tank/habitat appears clean and well maintained

Signs of an Unhealthy or Neglected Bearded Dragon:
• It will be inattentive and weak.
• It will be panicky and stressed when you approach or hold them.
• If you see evidence of wounds, burns, or other injuries. You notice previous injuries may not have healed properly.
• Their movement seems restricted or they don't have full mobility.
• Their eyes, nostrils, and/or mouth look swollen or have excess fluids.
• Their vent appears wet, is swollen, or has fecal matter smeared around it.
• When standing they have muscle twitches, tremors, or jerky movements.
• If they are missing a major body part such as a leg, foot, or tail.
• If they have a thin looking stomach and seem frail.
• If they are in an enclosure crowded with other lizards.
• If there are other species of lizards/reptiles sharing the enclosure with them.
• Their tank/habitat is dirty and unmaintained.
• If the tank has other bearded dragons in it which appear ill or sick (they could be contagious and make your bearded dragon sick within a few days).

Handling and Transporting Your Bearded Dragon

If you're new to bearded dragons you may not know how to properly handle or transport your beardie from his/her old owner to you. This section will go over the best ways to get your bearded dragon home without causing too much discomfort or stress.

Before You Buy the Bearded Dragon

Before you bring your bearded dragon home, you will need to make sure you have everything setup and ready for their arrival. Do not buy your tank, hide, food, and other accessories after you purchase your bearded dragon. When you transport your beardie the chances are that he/she will be slightly stressed and immediately putting them into an environment with ideal temperature and humidity when they arrive will help them cope sooner.

Transporting the Bearded Dragon Home

If you're picking your bearded dragon up yourself, you should bring a shoe box or a pet carrier to transport your bearded dragon. Younger bearded dragons should be fine in a shoebox, but adult bearded dragons will need a pet carrier to be transported. Place a towel in the bottom of whatever you're using to transport them.

When transporting them, do not take your bearded dragon out of their box or carrier until you're ready to place them in their new enclosure. If you take them out of their enclosure you risk them escaping and/or injuring themselves.

Unboxing a Shipped Bearded Dragon

If you purchase a bearded dragon from a non-local breeder, the chances are that they will ship the bearded dragon to your home. Most of the time breeders will guarantee their bearded dragon will arrive healthy, so it's not uncommon for them to supply extensive instructions of what to do when your
bearded dragon arrives. Feel free to use the guidelines below if you do not receive any unpacking directions from the breeder you purchased from:

1. It is highly recommended to be home when your bearded dragon arrives as they should be unboxed as soon as they arrive.
2. You should prepare for their arrival and already have their habitat setup with proper temperature and humidity levels.
3. When your bearded dragon arrives, unpack them in a confined area so if they try to escape they are easily captured.
4. Carefully pick up your bearded dragon and place them into their habitat. If you are new to bearded dragons and don't know how to properly handle them, please read the section in this guide to learn how to safely pick up and move bearded dragons.

Getting the Bearded into the Enclosure
When you arrive home, take the bearded dragon into the room with their tank and shut the door behind you (this way if they somehow escape, they are confined to one room). If it's a baby or young bearded dragon you can probably tilt the box so the bearded dragon comes out on its own. If it's an adult bearded dragon you will need to carefully lift him/her from the pet carrier into their new enclosure. Your bearded dragon may be resistant, but pick them up from underneath their legs and support their stomach (don't pick them up from above because that's what predators would do). If you're concerned the bearded dragon may bite you (it's rare for them to do this) you can protect your hands/arms with a towel or soft gloves.

When you are lifting your bearded dragon out of the carrier, make sure their legs, feet, and toes don't become snagged on anything (including the towel). When they are free of the carrier, gently place them in the enclosure on top of a perch or basking rock and secure the tank so he/she cannot escape.

The First Week Home
Your bearded dragon will need some time to adjust to their new environment. So during the first week try to not do anything with him (besides regular care and maintenance), you will want your bearded dragon to become used to his/her new environment and people touching and handling him/her can distract them from this.

You can make this easier and less stressful for your bearded dragon by not inviting people over, keeping pets out of the room, and by not staring at your beardie.
Supplies List for Your Bearded Dragon

Below is the supplies list of the items you will need to purchase for your bearded dragon. Keep in mind, this is just an overview of the items you will need. The specifics will be covered later in this manual.

Enclosure

The most important thing you will need for your bearded dragon is an enclosure. There are many names for it including:

- Tank
- Cage
- Vivarium

What Size Tank Do You Need?

You will need to make sure that your bearded dragon's tank is large enough. A tank too small can cause anxiety issues and can also hinder their growth. Bearded dragon's cannot have too big of a tank, so if you can't decide on which tank to get, go bigger rather than smaller. The only disadvantages of having a bigger tank is they are heavier and take up more space than a smaller tank.

If you have a baby bearded dragon and a large tank, it is recommended to feed them in a smaller tank (the smaller tanks doesn't need to be heated or decorated). The smaller tank will make it easier for them to catch and eat the insects. If you do decide to feed your bearded dragon in a separate tank, be sure to place your bearded back into his/her main tank immediately after feeding. This is because bearded dragons need high temperatures to digest their food and will most likely want to lounge on their basking rock.

Below are the minimum tank sizes for bearded dragons:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Baby bearded dragons</th>
<th>20 gallon tank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10-16 inch dragons</td>
<td>40 gallon tank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-20 inch dragons</td>
<td>50-75 gallon tank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20+ inch dragons</td>
<td>75-120 gallon tank</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Keep in mind that the above chart only applies to tanks which are a rectangle. Do not use tanks which are tall and narrow as they don't have enough floor space for bearded dragons.

The rule with bearded dragon tanks are: The Bigger The Better. Remember, bearded dragons are used to roaming in the wild so they will need to have a large enough tank that they can claim it as their territory. If your bearded dragon's tank is too small, he/she will become stressed and may try attacking the sides of the tank or their furniture. If you see your bearded dragon doing this, he/she will need a larger tank before they injure themselves or become ill from the stress.
Types of Tanks
There are many different types of tanks that you can use for bearded dragons. This section will go over all the current tanks available that you can use or build for your bearded dragon.

General Tank Requirements
Below are the requirements that every tank should meet:

- Should allow you to easily view your pet beardie (to monitor health and for entertainment).
- Should allow fresh air to easily circulate in and out of the tank. A tank sealed too tight will increase the humidity within the tank which can give bearded dragons respiratory issues.
- Should prevent other pets and insects from being able to get into the tank (you don't want your beardie eating any insects that may not be safe).
- Should be tall enough that your bearded dragon cannot easily escape

Glass Tanks
Solid glass tanks (like the ones people use as fish tanks) are by far the most popular tank people use for their reptiles. They are cheap, look nice, and can be found at any pet store. However, there are a few drawbacks to glass tanks.

First off, they are very heavy (especially the larger tanks). So once you put your tank in one spot, the chances are you will not want to move it again. Since glass is a poor insulator they will also require a bit more energy to keep the tank warm and your bearded dragon’s colors vibrant (some owners say the lack of insulation in the glass tank causes their beardies color to dull a bit).

Melamine Cages
If you're a do-it-yourself type person, then you may be interested in building a melamine cage. Melamine cages are built from melamine board which you can purchase at your local hardwood store. The advantage of these cages is their white color reflects the light which makes your bearded dragon's coloring look amazing.

Similar to glass tanks, melamine cages are extremely heavy and they can also be a bit expensive to build/buy.

PVC Cages
PVC cages are very similar to the shape and design of melamine cages except they are made from PVC plastic. This means the tanks are very lightweight and are easier to clean. Many people feel the sleek look of these cages makes them more attractive.

ABS Cages
ABS cages are identical to PVC cages except they are made from ABS plastic instead of PVC plastic. Some bearded dragon owners claim that ABS cages don't have the new plastic smell that PVC cages...
sometimes have, so if you're sensitive to odors and need a lightweight cage, ABS cages may be a good choice.

**Vision Cages**
Vision cages are professional display cases molded out of plastic. They are very attractive and have sliding front door so you don't have to lift the lid and lighting to get inside the cage. Vision cages are lightweight and easy to clean as well as stackable (so you can stack multiple cages to save space if you have more than one bearded dragon or reptile. The vision cages come with built-in light fixtures so you will have a flat surface on top of the cage.

**Tank Tops / Covers**
You will also need to get a screen cover for your bearded dragon's tank. The screen cover will serve two major purposes. The first is keeping things out of the tank, such as house insects, other pets, or unsupervised hands. The second is it keeps your bearded dragon from escaping (some beardies are very good escape artists).

If you're using a glass/fish tank/aquarium type enclosure, you will need to get a screen/mesh tank cover. You cannot use a plastic fish tank lid, a glass top, or any other solid tank cover. The reason for this is because your bearded dragon requires very low humidity, and a solid tank cover will prevent moisture from escaping the tank which will cause an increase in humidity. A screen cover for your tank will allow fresh air to enter the enclosure and moisture to leave.

Another reason you should not use any type of solid tank covers is because your UV lights and basking light will likely be resting on top of the cover. Glass and/plastic covers will not only block the UV rays, but they can also become very hot making the glass fragile and the plastic melt/warp.

» Click Here to See Recommended Tank Covers/Lids

**Lighting & Heating**
The next most important thing you need is to make sure your bearded dragon's tank is the right temperature and has the right type of light.

**Basking Light Bulb (heat)**
Basking lights produce heat for your bearded dragon and are vital to their health because bearded dragons are cold blooded and cannot generate their own body heat. Since bearded dragons come from a hot semi-desert environment so you will need to make sure that their tank’s temperature matches the temperature of their natural environment. You will need to get a basking light to do this. A basking light is similar to heat lamps used in kitchens and bathrooms, except they have been specifically designed to produce heat for reptiles, plants, outdoor pets, etc.
You should try to use name brand reptile lights, because lower quality lights have been known to overheat and burn out quickly or sometimes even explode. Keep in mind that the basking light will take up space on top of your bearded dragon's tank, so if your UV bulb is too large, you may not have room for both and will have to get a shorter UV bulb.

Proper heat is important for your bearded dragon's health. Their body requires high temperatures to function, digest food, and stay healthy. Not having the proper temperatures in a bearded dragon's tank is a serious issue and can cause serious health issues including death.

Generally one basking light is enough for most bearded dragon enclosures. If you have an enormous enclosure or a custom designed enclosure you may need more than one heat lamp to keep the daytime temperatures within the tank no lower than 85°F (30°C).

You will need to monitor the temperatures of your bearded dragon's tank if you change the setup or replace the bulbs. Slight changes can increase the temperatures of the tank and you will need to make sure the temperatures on the hot side of the tank don't exceed 110°F (43°C). Even though bearded dragons are home in desert environments, they can overheat. If your bearded dragon is overheating and cannot find a cool spot to escape the heat they can develop minor to major health issues and can die in extreme cases.

» Click Here to See a List of the Best Rated Basking Lights

Basking Light Fixture (heat)
The basking light fixture is what provides power to the basking light bulb. Basking lights generally don't come with a light fixture, so unless your bearded dragon tank comes with a built in fixture (like vision cages) you will need to purchase one of these separately. You can buy one at a pet store or if you're looking to save some money you can get one from a local hardware store. Keep in mind that basking lights produces a lot of heat, so your fixture will get extremely hot. It would be worth the money to find one that will allow you to move/adjust the light without burning yourself (if your tank opens at the top, like a fish tank, you will have to move the basking light every time you feed/get your bearded dragon).

» Click Here to See Our List of Recommended Basking Light Fixtures

Under Tank Heater (heat) - Optional
The basking light will provide heat for your bearded dragon for the 12-14 hours you keep the light on. But if your house gets below 70°F (21°C) at night, you will need to find a way to keep your bearded dragon's tank warm until it's time to turn their basking light on. Many reptile owners recommend under tank heaters, which is basically a heating pad that goes beneath your bearded dragon's tank to keep them warm overnight. Generally people will place the under tank heater beneath the bearded dragon's hide (their home).

» Click Here to See Our List of Recommended Under Tank Heaters
Hot Rocks (Heat) – DO NOT USE
Hot rocks are fake basking stones that have electric heaters built in. The idea is that they simulate hot stones that have been heated by the sun in the wild and bearded dragons can lie on them to absorb the heat. The problem with hot rocks is that bearded dragons like them a bit too much. There are numerous cases of bearded dragons getting seriously burned from lying on hot rocks for too long, or the hot rock getting so hot that it burns the bearded dragon. Unlike people, bearded dragons will not quickly acknowledge that they are being burned until it's too late and they are injured. Because of this, most breeders and experts recommend avoiding hot rocks (even the hot rocks that claim they don't burn reptiles).

UV Light Bulb (lighting)
Bearded dragons need ultra violet light to keep them healthy. Improper lighting can make them ill and can cause long term or permanent health issues. You will find that the right UV light will not only make your bearded dragon's tank look better but it will also improve your beardies color, mood, and appetite.

UVA and UVB rays are equally important in the bearded dragon's health. The UVA rays help stimulate their appetite and give them increased energy levels. UVB rays allow bearded dragons to synthesize vitamin D3. Without vitamin D3 a bearded dragon cannot properly absorb calcium and a lack of UVB rays can cause development issues such as metabolic bone disease.

You will want to get a full spectrum UV light so it will mimic the sun's natural rays as closely as possible. This means the UV bulb should emit both UVA and UVB rays. The size of your UV bulb is dependent on your bearded dragon's tank and the size of your dragon's basking light. On smaller tanks you will have to get a smaller UV bulb (one that spans 75% the width of the tank) so you will have enough space for the basking light to fit on top of the tank.

UV bulbs will weaken as they age, so you will need to replace the bulbs every 6 months even if they still appear to be working fine. There are many different types of bulbs that will fit in the UV fixture for your bearded dragon's tank.

Do not assume that every bulb is the same. In fact, you shouldn't use any bulb other than ones that have been designed for reptiles because other bulbs have the insides of the bulb coated with powder that filters out UV rays whereas reptile bulbs don’t.

» You can view the recommended UV Light Bulbs here

UV Light Fixture (lighting)
The chances are that you will need to purchase a UV light fixture as well (unless you already have one built in to your tank or you're using a fish tank that came with a light fixture). You can save some money and get a regular UV light fixture from a local hardware store instead of purchasing one from a pet shop. There are no differences except the one from the pet shop will look nicer and may be easier to turn on and off.
Light Timers – Recommended, But Not Necessary
Bearded dragons need between 12-14 hours of sunlight each day and it is vital (especially for younger dragons) that you don't forget to turn their lights on or off. Since most people have busy schedules, there are timers that you can purchase that will automatically turn your bearded dragon's lights on and off at the correct time each day. They are not expensive and can save you the effort and frustration of wondering if you remembered to turn on or off your bearded dragon's light.

» Click Here to See Recommended Light Timers

Temperature and Humidity Sensors
Since keeping the ideal temperature and humidity is vital to your bearded dragon's health, you will need an easy way to monitor these levels to make sure they are within range.

Two Thermometers
You will, most likely, need to purchase two thermometers for your bearded dragon's tank. One for the side of your tank with the basking light and one for the side of your tank furthest from the basking light. This way you can make sure the tank provides a temperature gradient from cool to hot so your bearded dragon can choose the temperature that is most comfortable.

Most reptile owners prefer thermometers that stick to the glass on the inside of the tank. This makes them easier to read and gives your bearded dragon more floor space.

» Click Here to See Recommended Thermometers, Infrared Thermometers, & Humidity Gauges

Infrared Thermometer (Optional)
Infrared thermometers are not required, but they can help you make sure there are no hot or cold spots in the tank. With these thermometers you simply point a laser at the spot you want the temperature read and it will tell you the exact temperature. Many bearded dragon owners will use infrared thermometers to make sure the basking rock isn’t too hot for their bearded dragon.

Humidity Gauges
You will need to get one humidity gauge to make sure your bearded dragon's tank is not getting too humid. Bearded dragons come from deserts, so they don't like a lot of moisture. It is recommended to get a humidity gauge designed for reptiles because the gauges are much easier to read. Many cheap humidity gauges are not very accurate, so it is recommended to find a humidity gauge that has good reviews.

» Click Here to See Recommended Thermometers, Infrared Thermometers, & Humidity Gauges
Substrate / Flooring

You will need flooring for your tank. Not only will it make your tank more decorative, but it will also make your beardie feel comfortable and more at home. There are many different types of substrate to choose from, so it's important that you know the risks involved with getting the wrong substrate.

Substrate Warnings
Bearded dragons will lick things to explore their environment. If the flooring you choose contains loose particles (sand, pebbles, wood chips, etc.) every time they lick there's a risk they can accidentally ingest those loose particles. Over time, these particles can become impacted in the bearded dragon's digestive track which can lead to major health issues or death.

The same is true when feeding bearded dragons. If you feed your bearded dragon on loose substrate they can get a mouthful of the substrate when they eat...and bearded dragons can be messy eaters.

Q: Don't Bearded Dragons Come Across Loose Substrate in the Wild?
Yes, bearded dragons come across all sorts of terrain in the wild including clay, rocks, packed dirt, mud, wood pieces, etc. However, just because a bearded dragon may occasionally come across sand or pebbles in the wild doesn't mean they should live in it 100% of the time in captivity. Don't forget the average lifespan for bearded dragons in the wild is 3-5 years (as opposed to 8-12 years in captivity) and it's likely that impaction either directly or indirectly leads to the death of many wild bearded dragons.

Q: I've Seen Hundreds of Bearded Dragons on Loose Substrate That Were Perfectly Healthy
Not all bearded dragons are the same. Some beardies will do just fine on loose substrate, however others will not. Since most people don't closely monitor their bearded dragon 24 hours/day there is no way to know if your bearded dragon is accidentally eating any of the substrate until it's too late. Because of this, it's not worth the risk since there are many other types of cheaper and easier to clean substrate available which pose no risk to bearded dragons.

Types of Substrate
Since there are so many types of substrate available for reptiles it can be difficult to tell which ones should be used for bearded dragons. Below are the different types of substrates:

Sand (Including Calci-Sand, Play Sand, Natural Sand) – Not Recommended
Sand looks nice and mimics a desert environment, but it can be very dangerous for bearded dragons. The tiny particles of sand can easily be ingested (causing impaction), cause eye infections, or respiratory problems. Dyed sand can also stain the scales of bearded dragons until their next shedding.

While many bearded dragon owners use sand, the risks outweigh the benefits so it is recommended to seek other types of substrate for your bearded dragon.
**Crushed Walnut Shells – Not Recommended**
Crushed walnut shells tend to be very sharp and the smaller pieces can easily be ingested. If the pieces don't cause impaction you still risk the sharp corners cutting the inside of the bearded dragon's digestive track.

**Paper Towels, Butchers Paper, Newspaper – Recommended for Young Bearded Dragons**
While these aren't the most attractive flooring choices, they are among the safest for young bearded dragons. They are soft, easy to replace (so cleaning is simple), and there is no risk of impaction.

» [Click Here to See Butcher's Paper and Other Paper Flooring for Bearded Dragon Tanks](#)

**Tile - Recommended**
Tile looks nice, is super easy to clean, and can look like natural rock if you get rougher dark tile. Several bearded dragon owners use tile flooring for these reasons, plus it holds heat and has zero risk for impaction. You can get tile from any hardware store or order from online.

» [Click Here to See Cool Tile Combinations and Patterns for Bearded Dragon Tanks](#)

**Reptile Carpet – Highly Recommended**
Reptile carpet is specifically designed for use by lizards that are at risk for impaction. The carpet is soft, easy to clean, lays flat in the tank, and has zero risk of impaction. A few people are concerned that there is a very slight risk their dragon's claws can get snagged in the carpeting, but if you cut away any loose loops that may be sticking out you can prevent this.

You can also use short regular indoor/outdoor carpet for your bearded dragon's tank. Just be sure the carpet is cleaned and doesn't contain any chemicals. You will also want to make sure that the carpet is fairly short so your bearded dragon's claws don't get snagged in the fibers. New carpet can sometimes have strong odors and you may want to air it out before placing it into a tank.

» [Click Here to See Recommended Reptile Carpet](#)

**Drawer / Shelf Liners – Recommended**
Many bearded dragon owners will use drawer or shelf liners as substrate. They are easy to clean and are designed to lay flat. Plus, they prevent claws from getting snagged and have a low chance of being accidentally ingested by your bearded dragon.

» [Click Here to See Attractive Drawer / Shelf Liners for Bearded Dragon Tanks](#)

**Other Substrates**
There are too many different types of substrates to list, but here are some general rules for choosing a good substrate.
• Don’t use flooring/bedding that contains loose particles. Always try to go for a solid substrate to prevent impaction.
• Don’t use substrate that holds moisture or gets damp. Coconut husks and other flooring that holds onto moisture (without drying quickly) can increase the humidity within your bearded dragon’s tank.
• Don’t use substrate that is made for other animals. If there’s a picture of children, snakes, or rabbits on your substrate bag, then it was not intended to be used by bearded dragons.

Furniture

Furniture is a necessity for your bearded dragon’s enclosure. Not only will it make your tank look better, but it will also give your bearded dragon things to do. You can get whatever furniture you want for your tank, it’s up to you. Bearded dragons do not necessarily need to have fake cacti or boulders to be happy. If you want to go for a Martian space theme, then go for it.

Tank Backgrounds & Landscapes

A tank background will not only improve your tank's appearance, but many owners claim the background makes their bearded dragon seem happier. In nature, bearded dragons are used to seeing scenery in all directions, so they are not accustomed to glass walls in every direction (if you're using a glass fish tank). Plus, a tank background can help your beardie to feel less vulnerable because he/she won't feel exposed in every direction.

Types of Backgrounds

Below are the different types of backgrounds you can get.

Pictures of Scenery – You can get scenic backgrounds in just about any theme you want whether its deserts, rocks, or woods. You will need to find a background that will cover the entire area of one side of your tank so it's recommended to measure and make sure the dimensions will work.

» You can see a list of recommended scenic backgrounds here

Custom Made Natural Backgrounds – If you want your tank to really stand out and WOW people, then you should look into getting custom tank backgrounds. These are backgrounds designed to mimic natural stone, wood, etc. that fit into the back of your tank. They look super realistic and can be decorated to look just like it would in nature.

» You can see a list of recommended custom backgrounds here

Hides (Homes for Bearded Dragons)

A hide is very important for bearded dragons. It’s not unusual for beardies to feel a bit vulnerable every now and then (whether from the UV light or from people/animals around the tank) so giving your
Beardie a place to hide will prevent stress and make them happier. Hides are also very important if/when your bearded dragon goes through brumation (semi-hibernation for beardies).

When choosing a hide you need to make sure it's large enough that your beardie can get in, turn around, and get out easily or get a hide that has an opening at both ends so he/she can get out easily. Bearded dragons love cramped places, but if it's too small he/she will not be able to use it.

» Click Here to View Our Top Recommended Hides

Basking Platforms
The basking platform is where your basking light will be pointing. It will be the hottest spot in the tank and is usually one of the bearded dragon's favorite spots. Basking platforms don't have to be anything fancy, they just need to be something that gets your bearded dragon closer to the basking light and is comfortable enough for him/her to rest on.

Some owners will place their beardies hide beneath the basking light. This can serve two purposes.
1. Your bearded dragon can climb on top of the hide to get closer to the basking light
2. The hide itself will be very warm and cozy so your bearded dragon will enjoy being inside

» Click Here to View Our Top Recommended Basking Platforms

Hammocks, Sticks, Branches & Perches
Bearded dragons love to climb and it is fairly amusing to watch your pet beardie climb into a branch or sleep in a reptile hammock. You can get branches from anywhere, but most people get them from nearby woods or trees. Just make sure that you strip all the bark from the branch to prevent your bearded dragon from shredding the bark into thousands of tiny pieces that can be ingested. You should also make sure there are no insects or parasites on any items you put into your beardies' cage.

» Click Here to Branches, & Perches
» Click Here to See Hammocks

Plants
Having plants in your bearded dragon's tank are hit or miss. Real plants oftentimes increase the tanks humidity, get knocked over, make a mess from the soil, or wither from the high temperatures. Fake plants look nice, but some bearded dragons try to eat the fake leaves (which are not good for your beardie).

Whether you want to use plants is up to you. But make sure all plants are parasite/bacteria free and monitor your beardie to make sure he/she doesn't try to eat the fake plants. You should also review the list of potentially poisonous plants (which is later in the manual) to make sure that you don't accidentally use any live plants which are poisonous for beardies.

» Click Here to View Plants
Food/Water Bowls

Food Bowls
You will need to get a food bowl for your bearded dragon. Since they eat greens/veggies/fruits you will need something deep enough to hold all the food and sturdy enough that it won't be knocked over when your bearded dragon bumps into it.

You may also consider getting another food bowl if you're going to feed your bearded dragon worms or other insects that move slowly.

» Click Here to See a List of Recommended Food & Water Bowls

Water Bowl
Some bearded dragons will have to learn to drink from a water bowl since they are not used to seeing standing water in their environment. If you need to teach your bearded dragon to drink from a water bowl you can do so by slowly pouring or dripping water into the bowl (making ripples). Bearded dragons recognize moving water as drinkable so if they're thirsty they should rush over and start drinking.

Bearded dragons are very efficient with water, so they don't need to have a large amount of water available in their tank. In fact, too large of a water bowl can increase the tank's humidity. Some owners prefer large shallow water bowls so their bearded dragon can sit in the pool of water (many bearded dragons will rest in water as it helps them digest their food). If you do have a large water bowl, be sure to clean it frequently because bearded dragons have a tendency to use the bathroom while they're in water.

Other bearded dragon owners don't even have a water bowl in their bearded dragon's tank. Instead, they hydrate their bearded dragon through misting, frequent bathing, water droppers, and/or feeding them fruits and vegetables high in water content.

» Click Here to See Misting Bottles, and Water Droppers

Misting Bottle
You will need to mist your bearded dragon's veggies to keep them from drying out in the tank. When you do mist them, be sure to take the veggie bowl outside the tank before misting. This way there's less risk of you increasing the tank's humidity level.

Some owners will also use misting bottles to mist their bearded dragons to hydrate them. The idea is that the mist will form water droplets on and around the bearded dragon which resembles dew that the bearded dragon can then drink.

There are a few concerns with misting. The biggest being that over-misting can increase the humidity levels within the tank which can cause upper respiratory infections. The other issue is that some bearded dragon owners aren't convinced all bearded dragons drink the water when they're misting.
Misting is up to you. If you feel misting benefits your bearded dragon then you should mist them. However, if you're unsure if your beardie is benefiting from the mist, then it would be best to reduce the frequency or stop all together.

» Click Here to View Misting Bottles

Food

Insects
You will need to purchase insects for your bearded dragon to eat. They should be labeled "feeder" insects, which means they were bred to be fed to pets. You cannot feed your bearded dragon insects purchased from bait shops or bugs you've found in your house or outside, because there is a high risk they will contain parasites and pesticides that can make your bearded dragon sick. Crickets are one of the most popular insects fed to beardies.

Insect Holding Tank
The chances are that you're not going to buy fresh insects each day for your bearded dragon. So you will need to invest in a small holding tank to keep your crickets or other bugs in until it's time to feed your bearded dragon. If you're feeding your bearded dragon worms, they generally do fine in the container they came in. However, keep in mind that some worms may burrow out of their plastic container so you may want to place any worm containers in a larger bowl or shallow bucket so any escaped worms won't get far.

» Click Here to See Some Inexpensive Insect Holding Tanks

Food for Insects
You will want to make sure your insects are well fed and healthy for your bearded dragon, so you should also purchase insect feed. This is fairly inexpensive and you usually scoop out small amounts from a jar to feed the insects.

» Click Here to See Recommended Insect Food

Plants/Veggies
Bearded dragons will also need some fresh plants and vegetables to eat. You can get these at your local grocery store or your garden if you grow your own vegetables. Please refer to the list of recommended plants, fruits, and vegetables in the Diet & Nutrition section to get an idea of what type of veggies to get.
**Vitamins and Minerals**

Two important vitamin and mineral supplements you will need to get are Vitamin A and a Vitamin D3 & Calcium supplement. These are available at most pet stores and will help your bearded dragon develop properly and maintain his/her health.

» Click Here to See the Recommended Reptile Supplements for Bearded Dragons

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**Your Bearded Dragon's Enclosure**

Whether you call it a tank, vivarium, cage, or terrarium your bearded dragon's enclosure will be his/her new home and it needs to be setup properly to mimic their natural environment as much as possible. This section will go over, in detail, everything you need to know about your bearded dragon's tank including where to put it and how to set it up.

**Where You Should Put It**

Your bearded dragon's tank should maintain one consistent temperature during the day, and another consistent temperature during the night. Because of this you should consider placing the tank in a room that also maintains a steady temperature.

The following rooms have temperatures that fluctuate throughout the day or during certain activities:

- Sunrooms
- Rooms with wood burning fireplaces
- Rooms with frequently used exterior doors
- Kitchens or rooms with heaters, ovens, or grills

Don't let your bearded dragon's tank receive natural sunlight. This will cause the temperature inside your beardies tank to increase to a point where it is unhealthy.
Consider Other Pets
You should also consider other pets when deciding where to place your bearded dragon's tank. If you have a cat or dog that will jump up to see inside the tank or if you have a dog that barks or a bird that squawks, you should consider placing the tank in a room away from them. This is because bearded dragons can become stressed from the presence of larger animals.

Of course, not every bearded dragon is this way and some beardies will be okay with the occasional bark or the curious cat, but you should monitor your bearded dragon to make sure he/she doesn't seem overly stressed. If you are pet sitting and you are concerned the dog/cat you’re watching will stress out your beardie, you can place a towel over the tank.

Consider Convenience
You will also need to put it in a location that's easily reached since you will be feeding your bearded dragon daily (and younger bearded dragons multiple times per day).

Final Notes
Your bearded dragon's health and wellbeing should come before your home's interior decoration or convenience. If your concern is the bearded dragon's tank matching the room it's in rather than the health of your beardie, you should reconsider getting a bearded dragon as a pet.

How to Setup the Enclosure
Once you've got all the needed supplies for your bearded dragon's enclosure, it can be a bit confusing trying to find the best way to organize all the habitat equipment. Below is an image of a basic bearded dragon habitat (this is the minimum you should have).
A – UV light
B – Heat lamp
C – Screen tank lid
D – Humidity and temperature gauge combo
E – Food dish
F – Reptile hide and basking rock combo
G – Temperature gauge for the hot side of the tank
Bearded Dragons Diet & Nutrition

Proper diet and nutrition is vital for your beard dragon's overall health. Unlike traditional pets, bearded dragons have a more complicated diet. But, like most things, once you develop a routine it becomes fairly easy and straightforward.

General Feeding Information

Bearded dragons are omnivores, which mean they eat plants as well as insects. Bearded dragons cannot have a diet consisting of all insects (although very young bearded dragons will eat mostly insects) and they cannot have a diet of just plants. It has to be a balanced diet of both. So it is up to the owner to make sure that their bearded dragon is receiving the correct ratio of plants to insects.

General Rules for Feeding Bearded Dragons

These rules apply to both adult and baby bearded dragons.

Rule 1)
Never feed your bearded dragon anything that is wider than the space between his/her eyes. Anything larger than this space is too large and can cause health issues during the digestion process. If you’re feeding a vegetable to your bearded dragon that’s wider than the space between their eyes, cut it into smaller pieces (if it's a leaf or something similar the bearded dragon should be ok). If you’re feeding your beardie insects that are wider than the space between their eyes (such as crickets, roaches, worms), then you cannot feed that insect to your beardie. You can either release them or save them for breeding purposes (if you have a breeding colony).

Rule 2)
Never feed your bearded dragon around loose substrate or material. Bearded dragons (especially younger beardies) can and will accidentally ingest any loose material around the food they're eating. So if your bearded dragon is on sand, wood chips, pebbles, or anything else that is not solid you will need to feed them in an area that has zero risk of accidental substrate ingestion. Feeding your bearded dragon on loose substrate can cause impaction.

Rule 3)
Don't feed your beardie any vegetables, greens, or fruit that has not been washed. Many unwashed vegetables contain small amounts of pesticide, bacteria, or other substances that don't pose health risks to larger animals (such as people), but can make your beardie ill.

Rule 4)
Don't feed your bearded dragon any insects you found around your house, outside, or purchased from a bait shop for fishing bait. These insects can carry parasites and pesticides that can make your bearded dragon sick or worse.
Rule 5) Don't feed your bearded dragon any insect or plant on the Poisonous Foods List (which is later in this section).

Rule 6) When your bearded dragon is done eating insects, don't leave the uneaten bugs in the tank. If you leave the insects in the tank they will hide from your bearded dragon, die of thirst or hunger, and/or start molting. Unless you want to pick up a bunch of dead insects and their body parts, you should collect the remaining uneaten bugs and save them for a later meal. Also, some insects (like crickets) have been known to nip on bearded dragons, so be sure to remove all uneaten insects from the tank after feeding.

Rule 7) Remove and replace any stale, dehydrated, or unappetizing fruits, veggies, or greens. Bearded dragons receive a large portion of their water from the veggies they eat each day (80%+ of a vegetable's weight is water). So you should replace the vegetables in your bearded dragon's tank at least once per day (or more if the veggies start to dry out from the basking light).

Feeding Young/Baby Bearded Dragons
Younger bearded dragons are rapidly growing and will need a diet consisting of mostly insects to provide the fat and proteins needed to grow. You should expect a young bearded dragon's diet to be 70-80% insects and 20-30% plants/vegetables/fruit.

Vegetables/Fruit/Greens
It's not uncommon for young beardies to not eat their vegetables at all. This is normal, but you should keep a fresh supply of vegetables in their feeding bowl to snack on when they get hungry. Eventually when your bearded dragon's rapid growth starts to slow, they should begin eating the veggies you leave in the cage.

If you feel your bearded dragon should be eating vegetables but he/she is still refusing them, try the following:

- Make sure the vegetables are fresh. The low humidity and high temperatures of your bearded dragon's tank can quickly dry out the veggies.
- Mist the vegetables with water to entice your bearded dragon to drink the droplets of water from the vegetables.
- Try a different combination of vegetables until you find a particular fruit/green/veggie that your bearded dragon enjoys. Some owners claim they have the best luck with foods that are more colorful.
- Try placing a few insects in the veggie bowl so your bearded dragon will ingest veggies with the insects.
- Leave a little bit of veggies on their basking spot
- Chop up the veggies into smaller pieces
- Hand feed your bearded dragon vegetables one at a time
Insects
Feeding your bearded dragon insects is fairly easy. You need to make sure that there are no loose particles where your bearded dragon is eating (sand, pebbles, wood chips, etc.) and that the insects are not too large for your bearded dragon to eat (it should be no wider than the distance between your bearded dragon's eyes).

You should feed a young bearded dragon three times per day as many insects as they can eat within a 10-15 minute time frame. When they are done eating or when the time is up, you should collect the uneaten insects and save them for a later meal.

If you're feeding your bearded dragon insects that move very slowly, such as worms, you may want to get a feeding bowl to put the insects in so your bearded dragon will have an easier time eating them.

» Click Here to See Recommended Feeding Bowls

Vitamins and Minerals

Vitamin D3 and Calcium Supplement
- Baby Bearded Dragons – Daily dose
- Juvenile Bearded Dragons – One dose 3-4 times per week

Vitamin A
- Bearded dragons up to 6 months old – The yolk remaining in the egg the bearded dragon was hatched in generally provided enough vitamin A to last 6 months.

» Click Here to See Recommended Reptile Supplements

Feeding Older/Adult Bearded Dragons
Adult bearded dragons will eat the same plants, fruits, and insects that younger bearded dragons eat, but they require different ratios. Adult bearded dragons will eat 70-80% veggies/greens/fruit and 20-30% insects. This is because adult bearded dragons are done growing and the excess fat/protein from insects is not needed.

Vegetables/Fruits/Greens
At this point in your bearded dragon's life, fruit, greens, and veggies will be the staple of their diet. You should keep a constant supply of fresh veggies in their tank throughout the day. It is recommended to place all the fruit/veggies/greens in one bowl so they can stay fresh longer and not become dehydrated.

Insects
You do not want to overfeed insects to your adult bearded dragon. This can cause him/her to become overweight and unhealthy. Since a mature dragon's diet will be mostly veggies you should feed him/her insects once per day. Bearded dragons are most active during the daytime so you should try to offer them the bulk of their food earlier in the day (after they wake up). During feeding you should let them
eat as many insects as they can within a 10-15 minute time period. When that time period is up, you should collect all the remaining insects from the tank.

Vitamins and Minerals

Vitamin D3 and Calcium Supplement

- Adult Bearded Dragons – Once per week

» Click Here to See a List of Recommended Reptile Supplements

Feeding Your Bearded Dragon Insects

Insects are a staple of every bearded dragon's diet. Bugs help provide bearded dragons with fat, protein, and additional calories needed for growth and to help maintain their health.

There are a variety of insects you can feed bearded dragons. However, since beardies will eat anything that moves in front of them it is up to you to make sure the insects they're eating are safe.

Unsafe Insects to Eat

You should not assume that your bearded dragon can eat any insect you find or buy. There are many insects that are unhealthy, poisonous, or too large for beardies to safely consume. Below is a list of insects NOT to feed your bearded dragon:

- Insects that glow – This includes: fireflies, lightning bugs, glowing worms, or any other insects you can see light up or glow in the dark. The chemical that makes these insects glow is lethal to bearded dragons. There are countless instances where people have fed their bearded fireflies and their bearded dragon died shortly after. It is not known if taking a bearded dragon that's eaten fireflies to a vet will help because there have been no cases of a bearded dragon surviving long enough to make it to the vet.

- Insects that are poisonous – If the insect is poisonous or has venom, do not feed it to your bearded dragon.

- Insects you've found or purchased for bait – Bearded dragons can only eat insects that have been specifically bred to be fed to pets called "feeder insects". You cannot feed your bearded dragon bugs you find around your house or outside because it's likely those bugs contain parasites and/or pesticides that will make your bearded dragon sick.

- Insects that are too big for your bearded dragon – The digestive tract in bearded dragons runs along their spinal cord, so anytime they eat food that's too large (whether bugs or veggies), there's the risk of it paralyzing the bearded dragon during the digestion process. Never feed your bearded dragon any insect that is wider than the distance between the bearded dragon's eyes.
When you purchase insects you can generally specify the size. For example, with crickets you can get ¼", ½", ¾", or 1" crickets.

**Safe Insects to Eat**

While there are a lot of insects that bearded dragons CAN eat, you are generally limited to feeding your bearded dragon insects that are popular among feeder insect breeders. Fortunately, most of the bugs bred to become feeder insects are favorites among all bearded dragons. Below is a list of common feeder insects you can buy that are safe and healthy for your bearded dragon to eat:

- **Black Soldier Fly Larvae** – Great for both young and adult bearded dragons.
- **Butterworms** – These are high calorie insects that are perfect for growing bearded dragons and gravid female beardies. Since they are high calorie you need to watch out for overfeeding adult beardies because they can gain too much weight.
- **Cockroaches** – Cockroaches are safe for young and adult bearded dragons. Just make sure they are bought as feeder insects and are not too large for your dragon to eat.
- **Crickets** – Crickets are the most popular feeder insect purchased for bearded dragons. They come in different sizes so they are perfect for both small and adult beardies.
- **Dubia Roaches** – Dubia roaches are low maintenance and easy to breed so many people breed these themselves to save money. Plus they are a favorite among young and adult bearded dragons.
- **Earthworms** – Earthworms are a great snack and treat for both young and adult bearded dragons.
- **Locusts** – Locusts are similar to crickets and are great for young and adult bearded dragons.
- **Redworms** – Redworms are another bearded dragon favorite and are healthy for young and adult bearded dragons.
- **Superworms** – Superworms are a high calorie insect and are great for younger bearded dragons or females that are gravid/laying eggs. They should be given as treats to adult beardies because overfeeding can cause unhealthy weight gain.

**Gut Loading Insects**

Most insects do not eat while being shipped or when they are under high-stress environments (like at pet stores). You do not want to feed hungry insects to your bearded dragon because they will be less nutritious than insects that have been eating healthily. To avoid feeding your bearded dragon hungry insects you should "gut load" them. Gut loading is when you feed your insects highly nutritious food before they are eaten by your beardie.
It is recommended to gut load your insects with specially designed cricket/insect food Click Here to See the Top Recommended Gut Loading Foods. You can also gut load your insects with moistened lizard pellets and provide raw vegetables, carrots, orange slices, sweet potatoes, etc. for a water source. It is important to never water insects with a water bowl since they will drown in it.

» [Click Here to See the Top Recommended Gut Loading Foods]

**Feeding Your Bearded Dragon Vegetables**

Vegetables are a major staple of every bearded dragon’s diet. Bearded dragons will receive most of the water and vitamins/minerals they need to stay healthy through their vegetables.

When feeding your bearded dragon veggies you need to make sure they are not too large for your bearded dragon to digest. You need to make sure they are no wider than the space between your bearded dragon’s eyes. If a raw vegetable is too hard for your bearded dragon to bite into, you will want to cook the vegetable to make it softer before feeding it to your bearded dragon. If/when you do cook veggies for your bearded dragon; you need to make sure they are at room temperature (not hot) when you feed them to your beardie, otherwise you can risk burning his/her mouth.

- You need to cut the food into smaller pieces.

- You need to cook this food before serving it.

**Ca:P** - Calcium to Phosphorous ratio

**A:D:E** - Vitamin A / Vitamin D / Vitamin E ratio - Ideal is 100:10:1

**H20** - The percentage of 100 grams of the vegetable’s weight which is water

**1234 IU** - The amount of Vitamin A in the vegetable. The higher the value, the more vitamin A.

*Note - All the nutritional information below is based off of a 100 gram serving size.

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<tr>
<td>Beetroot</td>
<td></td>
<td>0 IU</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Bell Peppers (Raw)</td>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>370 IU</td>
<td>7.4 mcg</td>
<td>0.3 mg</td>
<td>93.9%</td>
<td>370:0:1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bok choy</td>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>4249 IU</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>95.5%</td>
<td>4249:0:1</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broccoli (Raw)</td>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>623 IU</td>
<td>102 mcg</td>
<td>0.7 mg</td>
<td>89.3%</td>
<td>311:0:1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brussel Sprouts (Cooked)</td>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>775 IU</td>
<td>140 mcg</td>
<td>1.2 mg</td>
<td>88.9%</td>
<td>775:0:1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Butternut squash</td>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>11155 IU</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>87.8%</td>
<td>3718:0:1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cabbage (Raw)</td>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>98 IU</td>
<td>76 mcg</td>
<td>0.5 mg</td>
<td>92.2%</td>
<td>98:0:1</td>
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<td>Carrots</td>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>16705 IU</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>88.3%</td>
<td>16705:0:1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Carrot tops</td>
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<td>Cauliflower (Raw)</td>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>13 IU</td>
<td>16 mcg</td>
<td>0.4 mg</td>
<td>91.9%</td>
<td>13:0:1</td>
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<td>Celery</td>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>449 IU</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>95.4%</td>
<td>449:0:1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chicory</td>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>5717 IU</td>
<td>372%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>1143:0:1</td>
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<td>Collard greens</td>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>6668 IU</td>
<td>638%</td>
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<td>90.6%</td>
<td>1333:0:1</td>
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<td>72 IU</td>
<td>702 mcg</td>
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<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Ratio</td>
<td>Vitamin A</td>
<td>Vitamin K</td>
<td>Vitamin C</td>
<td>Retinol</td>
<td>% Daily Value</td>
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<tr>
<td>Endive</td>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>1:1.9</td>
<td>2167 IU</td>
<td>231 mcg</td>
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<td>Green beans</td>
<td>1:1</td>
<td>1:1</td>
<td>690 IU</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>90.3%</td>
<td>690:0:1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lentils (Cooked)</td>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>1:0.1</td>
<td>8 IU</td>
<td>1.7 mcg</td>
<td>3.3 mg</td>
<td>69.6%</td>
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<td>Kale</td>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>1:2.4</td>
<td>15376 IU</td>
<td>1021%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>84.5%</td>
<td>15376:0:0</td>
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<td>Kohlrabi</td>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>1:0.5</td>
<td>36 IU</td>
<td>0.1 mcg</td>
<td>0.4 mg</td>
<td>91.0%</td>
<td>36:0:1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mushrooms, Portabella (Raw)</td>
<td>Very Rarely</td>
<td>1:0.1</td>
<td>0 IU</td>
<td>0 mcg</td>
<td>0.6 mg</td>
<td>91.2%</td>
<td>0:0:0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mustard greens</td>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>1:2.4</td>
<td>10502 IU</td>
<td>622%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>90.8%</td>
<td>2625:0:1</td>
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<td>Okra (Raw)</td>
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<td>375 IU</td>
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<td>Parsley</td>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>1:2.4</td>
<td>8425 IU</td>
<td>2050%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>87.7%</td>
<td>8425:0:1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parsnips</td>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>1:0.5</td>
<td>0 IU</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>79.5%</td>
<td>0:0:1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pattypan squash</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peas (Green)</td>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>1:0.2</td>
<td>765 IU</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>78.8%</td>
<td>765:0:1</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pumpkins</td>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>1:0.5</td>
<td>7385 IU</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>91.6%</td>
<td>3692:0:1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Radicchio</td>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>1:0.5</td>
<td>27 IU</td>
<td>255 mcg</td>
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<td>93.2%</td>
<td>5:0:1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rutabagas (Raw)</td>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>1:0.8</td>
<td>2 IU</td>
<td>0.3 mcg</td>
<td>0.5 mg</td>
<td>89.7%</td>
<td>2:0:1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Snow peas</td>
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<td>1087 IU</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>88.9%</td>
<td>1087:0:1</td>
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<td>Spaghetti squash</td>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>1:1.9</td>
<td>50 IU</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>91.6%</td>
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<td>Spring greens</td>
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</table>
Sweet Potato (Raw)  Rarely  1:0.6  **14185 IU**  1.8 mcg  0.6 mg  77.3%  14185:0:1

Swiss Chard (Raw)  Rarely  1:1.1  6116 IU  830 mcg  1.8 mg  92.6%  1529:0:1

Turnip greens  Daily  1:4.5  **11586 IU**  314%  6%  89.7%  1931:0:1

Yams (Raw)  Occasionally  1:0.3  138 IU  2.3 mcg  0.5 mg  69.6%  138:0:1

Yellow squash  Daily  1:0.4  200 IU  5%  2%  94.6%  200:0:1

Zucchini (Raw)  Occasionally  1:0.2  490 IU  0 mcg  0.8 mg  92.7%  490:0:0

Vegetables to Avoid
Not all vegetables are healthy for your bearded dragon. Below are some of the veggies that you should consider removing from your bearded dragon’s diet.

Lettuce – Lettuce is not nutritious for bearded dragons. They are mostly water and provide no vitamins or minerals. You should avoid feeding your bearded lettuce or any type of salad mix with the word "Lettuce" in it.

Spinach – Spinach is healthy for people, but it causes calcium to bind to it which makes it difficult for bearded dragons to digest. Because of this, lettuce should be avoided.

Feeding Your Bearded Dragon Greens/Plants
Greens/plants are a great way to mix up your bearded dragon’s diet and offer him/her some more unique options for food. Below are the safe greens that you can feed your beardedie:

- Feed the flowers and flower buds
- Feed the leaves
- Feed the petals
- Feed the plant itself (remove flowers and buds).
Ca:P - Calcium to Phosphorous ratio  
A:D:E - Vitamin A / Vitamin D / Vitamin E ratio - Ideal is 100:10:1  
H20 - The percentage of 100 grams of the vegetable’s weight which is water  
1234 IU - The amount of Vitamin A in the vegetable. The higher the value, the more vitamin A.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plants 100g</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Prepare</th>
<th>Ca:P</th>
<th>Vit. A</th>
<th>Vit. K</th>
<th>Iron</th>
<th>H20</th>
<th>A:D:E</th>
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<tr>
<td>Alfalfa</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>🥗</td>
<td>1:0.5</td>
<td>155 IU</td>
<td>30.5 mcg</td>
<td>1 mg</td>
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<tr>
<td>Arugula</td>
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<td>1:3.1</td>
<td>2373 IU</td>
<td>109 mcg</td>
<td>1.5 mg</td>
<td>91.7%</td>
<td>2373:0:1</td>
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<td>Astilbe</td>
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<tr>
<td>Baby’s tears</td>
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<td>🥗</td>
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<tr>
<td>Basil</td>
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<td>Borage</td>
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<td>Coriander</td>
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<td>4924 IU</td>
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<td>67.8%</td>
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<td>17.4 mg</td>
<td>65.1%</td>
<td>4751:0:0</td>
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</table>
Feeding Your Bearded Fruit

Bearded dragons love fruits as well. It’s sweet and most fruit is full of water and keeps them hydrated. However, keep in mind that not all fruit is edible by bearded dragons. Citrus fruit is difficult for them to digest and should be avoided. When feeding your bearded dragon fruit, you should always make sure it is cut into pieces small enough that your bearded dragon can safely digest it (the general rule is the fruit should be cut into pieces that are no wider than the space between the bearded’s eyes).

- You need to cut the food into smaller pieces.

- You need to cook this food before serving it.

Ca:P - Calcium to Phosphorous ratio

A:D:E - Vitamin A / Vitamin D / Vitamin E ratio - Ideal is 100:10:1

H20 - The percentage of 100 grams of the vegetable’s weight which is water

1234 IU - The amount of Vitamin A in the vegetable. The higher the value, the more vitamin A.

<table>
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<tbody>
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<td>Apples</td>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>1:0.5</td>
<td>54 IU</td>
<td>2.2 mcg</td>
<td>.1 mg</td>
<td>85.6%</td>
<td>54:0:1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apricot</td>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>1:0.6</td>
<td>1926 IU</td>
<td>3.3 mcg</td>
<td>0.4 mg</td>
<td>86.4%</td>
<td>963:0:1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banana</td>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>1:0.2</td>
<td>64 IU</td>
<td>0.5 mcg</td>
<td>0.3 mg</td>
<td>74.9%</td>
<td>64:0:1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blackberries</td>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>1:1.3</td>
<td>214 IU</td>
<td>19.8 mcg</td>
<td>0.6 mg</td>
<td>88.1%</td>
<td>107:0:1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blueberries</td>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>1:0.5</td>
<td>54 IU</td>
<td>19.3 mcg</td>
<td>0.3 mg</td>
<td>84.2%</td>
<td>54:0:1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruit</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Vitamin A (IU)</td>
<td>Carotene (mcg)</td>
<td>Iron (mg)</td>
<td>Pulp Percentage</td>
<td>Notes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------</td>
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<td>----------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chayote</td>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>4.1 mcg</td>
<td>0.3 mg</td>
<td>94.2%</td>
<td>None</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cherries</td>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>64 IU</td>
<td>0.4 mg</td>
<td>82.2%</td>
<td>64:0:1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cranberries</td>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>60 IU</td>
<td>0.3 mg</td>
<td>87.1%</td>
<td>20:0:1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figs</td>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>10 IU</td>
<td>2.0 mg</td>
<td>30.0%</td>
<td>5:0:1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grapes</td>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>66 IU</td>
<td>0.4 mg</td>
<td>80.5%</td>
<td>66:0:1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grapefruit</td>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1150 IU</td>
<td>0.1 mg</td>
<td>88.1%</td>
<td>1150:0:1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guava</td>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>624 IU</td>
<td>0.3 mg</td>
<td>80.8%</td>
<td>624:0:1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kiwi</td>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>87 IU</td>
<td>0.3 mg</td>
<td>83.1%</td>
<td>29:0:1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mangos</td>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>765 IU</td>
<td>0.1 mg</td>
<td>81.7%</td>
<td>382:0:1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melons</td>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>3382 IU</td>
<td>0.2 mg</td>
<td>90.2%</td>
<td>3382:0:1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nectarine</td>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>332 IU</td>
<td>0.3 mg</td>
<td>87.6%</td>
<td>332:0:1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Papayas</td>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>1094 IU</td>
<td>0.1 mg</td>
<td>88.8%</td>
<td>1094:0:1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peaches</td>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>326 IU</td>
<td>0.3 mg</td>
<td>88.9%</td>
<td>326:0:1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pears</td>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>23 IU</td>
<td>0.2 mg</td>
<td>83.7%</td>
<td>23:0:1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pineapple</td>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>58 IU</td>
<td>0.3 mg</td>
<td>86.0%</td>
<td>58:0:0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plum</td>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>345 IU</td>
<td>0.2 mg</td>
<td>87.2%</td>
<td>345:0:1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pomegranate</td>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0 IU</td>
<td>0.3 mg</td>
<td>77.9%</td>
<td>54:0:1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prickly Pears</td>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>43 IU</td>
<td>0.3 mg</td>
<td>87.6%</td>
<td>43:0:0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Fruit to Avoid**
You should monitor the fruit you feed your bearded dragon, because not all fruit is safe and easy for them to digest. Below is a list of the fruit you should avoid:

**Avocados** – Avocados are toxic and should not be fed to bearded dragons. Although their toxicity levels are unknown, they are toxic enough that they are lethal for birds.

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**Vitamins and Minerals for Bearded Dragons**

Bearded dragons require a balanced diet that contains all the vitamins and minerals they need to stay healthy. This section will go over all the vitamins and minerals you need to supply your bearded dragon either in their diet or as a supplement.

**Iron**
Bearded dragons will generally receive enough iron from the plants they eat and will not need an iron supplement.

**Vitamin A**
Bearded dragons will get most of their vitamin A requirements from the vegetables and greens that they eat. However, it may be necessary to use a vitamin A supplement to ensure they are receiving the amount of vitamin A they need to stay healthy.
Bearded dragons can overdose on vitamin A if they are taking a supplement containing synthetic vitamin A. So you should only give your bearded dragon vitamin A supplements that use beta carotene for vitamin A. Beta carotene is what vegetables contain and it allows the bearded dragon's body to convert the beta carotene to vitamin A or if the bearded dragon doesn't need any vitamin A their body can simply excrete the beta carotene so they don't overdose on vitamin A.

While possible, it is extremely unlikely that your bearded dragon will overdose on vitamin A from eating too many vegetables. So vitamin A toxicity is generally not a concern unless you’re using supplements that don’t contain beta carotene.

» Click Here to See the Recommended Vitamin A Supplements That Are Not Dangerous

**Vitamin D3 and Calcium**
Two of the most important vitamins and minerals that your bearded dragon needs is vitamin D3 and calcium. They are important for bone development so they should always be given to younger bearded dragons as well as female bearded dragons that are about to lay eggs. Bearded dragons cannot absorb calcium without vitamin D3, so you will need to give them these supplements simultaneously. Most reptile multivitamins combine vitamin D3 and calcium already so you don’t have to worry about doing it yourself.

Naturally, bearded dragons receive most of the vitamin D3 they need from the sun's UV rays. This is why it's important to change your UV bulbs out every 6 months. If your bearded dragon is frequently outside in the sunlight or if you use a full spectrum UV light (that’s not blocked by your bearded dragon's tank lid) you can reduce the dosage by half.

Below how much vitamin D3 and Calcium a bearded dragon needs, based on their age.

**Baby Bearded Dragons** – Since they are still developing their bones they need to have a daily dose of vitamin D3 and calcium.

**Juvenile Dragons** – Need a vitamin D3 and calcium supplement with their meal 3-4 times per week.

**Adult Bearded Dragons** – Need a vitamin D3 and calcium supplement with their meal once per week.

**Choosing a Vitamin D3 and Calcium Supplement** – You will want to choose a supplement that contains a low amount of phosphorous. Look for supplements that contain calcium to phosphorous ratios of 2:1 or 3:1.

» Click Here to View Recommended Vitamin D3 and Calcium Supplements
Poisonous Plants

Since bearded dragons will eat plants, you will need to make sure you don’t have any household plants that they may try to eat if you let them out of their tank. The same is true for outdoor plants if you decide to let them outside.

Below is a list of poisonous plants for reptiles.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plant</th>
<th>Toxic Parts</th>
<th>Plant</th>
<th>Toxic Parts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acokanthera</td>
<td>All but fruit</td>
<td>Larkspur</td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amaryllis</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Laurel</td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angel's Trumpet</td>
<td>Flowers, leaves, seeds</td>
<td>Lily-of-the-Valley</td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Azalea</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Lobelia</td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balsam Pear</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Locoweed</td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baneberry</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Lupine</td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belladonna</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Marijuana</td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bird of Paradise</td>
<td>Flowers, seed pods</td>
<td>Milkweed</td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bittersweet</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Mistletoe</td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Locust</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Mock Orange</td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boxwood</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Moonseed</td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Braken Fern</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Monkshood</td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buckthorn</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Morning Glory</td>
<td>Seeds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burdock</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Narcissus</td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buttercup</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Oak</td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caladium</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Oleander</td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calla Lily</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Peony</td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plant Name</td>
<td>Part(s)</td>
<td>Poisonous Plant(s)</td>
<td>All Sensitivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catclaw Acacia</td>
<td>Leaves, twigs</td>
<td>Periwinkle</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caster Bean</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Peyote</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinaberry</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Philodendron</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clematis</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Poison Hemlock</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coral Plant</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Poison Ivy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crocus</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Poison Oak</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cycad</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Poison Sumac</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wild Daffodil</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Poinsettia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daphne</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Poppy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Death Camas</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Pokeweed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delphinium</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Primrose</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dieffenbachia</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Privet</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elderberry</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Ragwort</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elephant’s Ears</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Red Maple</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Euonymus</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Rhododendron</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European Pennyroyal</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Rosary Pea</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four o’clock</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Shamrock Plant</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heliotrope</td>
<td>Leaves</td>
<td>Skunk Cabbage</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Henbane</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Snowdrop</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holly</td>
<td>Berries, leaves</td>
<td>Sorrel</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horse Chestnut</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Spurges</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horse Nettle</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Star of Bethlehem</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Keeping Your Bearded Dragon Hydrated

As you can imagine, hydration is important for any animal, especially bearded dragons which are exposed to daily temperatures around 100°F and low humidity. Fortunately, bearded dragons have adapted to live in extreme conditions and don’t require as much water as you would think. In fact, many bearded dragons get enough water from their veggies and baths and don’t even need a drinking bowl (of course this depends on how well they eat their veggies and how frequently you bathe them).

How to Tell if Your Bearded Dragon is Dehydrated

You can tell if your bearded dragon is dehydrated by lightly pinching their skin with your fingers and letting go. The same method works with people using the skin on the back of their hands. Hydrated skin will immediately release and lie flat against the body. Skin that’s dehydrated will take longer to go back to normal.

You can also check for dehydration in your beardie by looking at their overall appearance. If their skin is wrinkled, their eyes are sunken, the have a lack of energy, or aren’t eating as well, it can indicate dehydration.
*Note – A lack of energy and lack of appetite can also be signs of brumation, which is normal for bearded dragons. If you feel your bearded dragon is brumating or about to start brumating, please read the section of this manual on brumating.

**How to Tell if Your Bearded Dragon is Too Hydrated**
Generally over hydration isn't a common issue in bearded dragons, but it can occur. You can tell if your beardie is too hydrated by monitoring their bathroom habits. If they are frequently using the bathroom or if they are having diarrhea or runny fecal matter, it's a sign they may be over hydrated.

**How to Keep Your Bearded Dragon Hydrated**

**Vegetables and Greens**
Bearded dragons will get a large portion of their water needs from the fruits, vegetables, and greens they eat. This is because most of the weight in veggies is actually water. Keeping a fresh supply of greens available in your bearded dragon's tank is a good start to making sure they are receiving enough water.

**Baths**
Bathing your bearded dragon is another method to keep your beardie well hydrated. Not only will the water feel good on their scales, but beardies will usually drink the water their bathing in. This is why it's important to keep their bath water clean. If you're concerned your bearded dragon is dehydrated, a bath is a really good way to get them rehydrated.

**Water Bowls**
Keeping a water bowl with fresh water is another way to keep your bearded dragon hydrated. Don't worry about the water's temperature because beardies aren't used to cold water in the desert.

Some bearded dragons will not recognize the water in their water bowl (standing water isn't something they come across often in nature), so you may need to show your bearded dragon that there is water in the bowl by creating small ripples. You can do this by slowly pouring/dripping water into the bowl or by tapping the bowl with your finger to create the ripples.

**Misting**
Misting is something that half the bearded dragon community recommends, while the other half says to avoid. Misting your bearded dragon is where you use a spray bottle on the "Mist" setting and lightly spray the mist on the front your beardie so he/she can lap up the water droplets. Many people claim that misting is not natural to bearded dragons (as mists are not common in deserts). However, you mist your bearded dragon to create water droplets similar to dew drops and rain drops. Misting should not be used to form a water cloud.
Misting your bearded dragon is completely up to you. Many people who do not mist give their bearded dragons regular baths (once every 2 days) or have their beardedie well trained to drink from their water bowl. Each bearded dragon is different and some hate baths, others don’t eat their veggies (the main source of water for most dragons), and the rest may not drink from the water bowl. So if misting works for you and your bearded dragon and he/she is healthy there is no reason to stop misting.

Misting Rules
In order to properly mist your bearded dragon, please follow these rules.

1) Do not use cold water. Cold water can be too much of a shock to your bearded. Don’t use any water colder than room temperature, warm water would be ideal.

2) When misting, take your bearded dragon out of the tank to mist. You do not want to increase the tank's humidity too often because this can cause upper respiratory infections in bearded dragons. By misting your bearded outside of his/her tank the bearded dragon will get the water and the tank will stay dry. Be sure to keep your bearded dragon outside of his/her tank until they are completely dry.

3) Don’t mist your bearded dragon too frequently. Once per day should be the maximum you need to mist.

Water Droppers
Oftentimes owners who are against misting, yet have a bearded dragon that is dehydrated will using a water dropper to put water drops on the tip of their mouth. The bearded dragon will then lap up the water droplets at the end of its mouth. Using a water dropper is safer than misting because it gives your bearded dragon water without the risk of increasing the humidity of the tank.
Bearded Dragon Care

Cleaning the Tank

Cleaning your bearded dragon's tank regularly is necessary to keep your beardedie healthy, control odor, and to keep your tank looking attractive. Below is a good cleaning schedule that you can follow:

**Everyday**
Every day you should need to do the following:

1. Clean up any fecal matter or urea. If you use tile or any other solid substrate you can wipe it away with a paper towel. If you use a loose substrate such as sand, pebbles, etc. you may need to scoop it out. Don’t forget to check any furniture in your bearded dragon's tank as well, because your bearded dragon may have used the bathroom there too.

2. Remove any uneaten food. This includes old veggies/fruit/greens as well as dead insects or random insect body parts.

3. Remove and clean the food and water dishes with hot soapy water. It’s not unusual for bearded dragons to sit in part of their water bowl, which can contaminate their water if it’s not washed and refilled daily. The food bowls will need to be cleaned as well; especially if insects have gotten in the food bowl (insects may have molted or used the bathroom in the food bowl making it unsanitary).

**Weekly**

1. If you have loose substrate (sand, wood, etc.), you should remove and replace it. Some people will wash it and re-use it, but it’s usually not too expensive and is more convenient to replace it. If you have a solid substrate (tile, reptile carpet, etc.) you should remove it and clean it to kill any bacteria.

2. Clean the inside of the tank with anti-bacterial spray that’s safe for pets. If you don’t have any you can mix 1 part vinegar to 6 parts water. Make sure the tank is completely dry and doesn’t smell like cleaning chemicals before you put your bearded dragon back into the tank.

3. Clean the basking rock, hide, and other furniture with the same water/vinegar solution. You may need to use a soft to stiff brush to scrub on the more porous surfaces.

» Click Here to View Recommended Cleaning Supplies
Bathing Bearded Dragons

You should bathe your bearded dragon frequently. Bathing not only keeps them clean, but it also helps to keep them hydrated since bearded dragons will often drink the water when they're bathing.

How Often Should You Bathe Your Bearded Dragon

Most bearded dragon owners will bathe their bearded dragon anywhere from once to twice per week. However, some owners bathe them as frequently as once per day and others as rarely as once every two weeks.

The bathing frequency of your bearded dragon really depends on you and your beardie. Consider the following when determining how often you should bathe your beardie:

- Does your beardie enjoy baths?
- Does bathing your beardie help him/her use the bathroom?
- Does your beardie often drink the bathwater?

If you answered "yes" to one or more of the questions above, you should probably bathe your beardie more frequently.

How to Bathe Your Beardie

The following steps outline how to give your bearded dragon a bath.

1. Prepare the bath water. You should bathe your bearded dragon in warm water that’s around 95-100°F (35-37°C). You can measure the water temperature by using a digital thermometer with a waterproof probe.

   Keep in mind that bathing your bearded dragon will give you (or someone else) the opportunity to clean or adjust their tank.

2. Fill a bath tub or a sink with enough water to reach the bearded dragon's shoulder (a few inches deep). You should make sure your bearded dragon can easily keep his/her head out of the water.

3. Some bearded dragons will prefer to rest on your hand during the bath, others may enjoy sitting on top of a folded wash cloth (so they don't slip in the sink or tub), and a few beardies may enjoy scampering around in the water.

4. You should bathe your bearded dragon for 10-30 minutes. If you give your bearded dragon longer baths, you may need to add some more water to make sure it stays a comfortable temperature for your beardie.

5. Bearded dragons enjoy drinking and using the bathroom while bathing. If your beardie defecates while bathing, you should remove it from the water as soon as possible.
6. After bathing your bearded dragon you should thoroughly clean the tub or sink that you used to bathe him/her. Bearded dragons can carry bacteria so cleaning the tub/sink will help kill that bacteria.

7. When you remove your bearded dragon from the bath, you should thoroughly dry them with a dry soft towel. You will want to make sure they are completely dry before putting them back into their cage because excess moisture can increase their tank’s humidity and it can eventually lead to respiratory infections.

Taking Your Bearded Dragon Outside

If you live in a location that's low in humidity and has temperatures above 80°F (26°C), then you can take your bearded dragon outside. You will either need to have an enclosure for them outside or you will need to have someone monitor your bearded dragon to make sure the following does not happen:

- Make sure he/she doesn't eat any insects or bugs
- Make sure they are protected from potential predators such as large birds, dogs, cats, etc.
- Make sure they are not outside when the temperature is too low
- Make sure they are not outside when the humidity is too high

Natural sunlight is extremely healthy for bearded dragons and your beardie will most likely enjoy being outside. If you are considering taking your bearded dragon outside, you may want to invest in a bearded dragon leash, which will allow you to keep control of them while they're outside.

» Click Here to View Bearded Dragon Leashes

Picking Up and Handling Your Beardie

As a bearded dragon owner, you should expect to regularly pick up your bearded dragon for baths, cleaning his/her cage, or just to spend more time with them. This section will go over the best way to pick up and handle your bearded dragon so you don't hurt your beardie or yourself.

Bearded dragons are naturally very calm and tame, which is one of the many reasons why they make such good pets, so they should be fairly easy to handle. However, keep in mind that if you handle them roughly or if they are scared they may try to squirm away or bite you (biting is very rare).

With this in mind, here are some tips to picking up and handling your bearded dragon:

- Approach him/her slowly without causing alarm
- Don’t try to suddenly grab the beardie or try to pick him/her up from behind or above (this is what predators do and it will feel threatening to most bearded dragons not used to being handled).
• Slowly reach your hand (palm up) beneath the bearded dragon and extend it under their body from there. Some people bring their hand next to their head and slowly move it beneath them so they step up onto it. Ideally you want their head to be supported by your hand with their tail supported by your forearm (the bearded dragon will be facing away from you in this position).
• When you are holding your bearded dragon be sure that you are fully supporting his/her weight.
• After your bearded dragon is used to being held, you can try different positions until you find the one that your bearded dragon is most comfortable with.

When holding/picking up your bearded dragon DO NOT:
• Grab his/her tail or legs
• Squeeze or grasp any part of the bearded dragon's body too tightly (make sure children know this)
• Don't pick them up if they don't want to be handled (unless you are familiar with your bearded dragon). If you need to coax your bearded dragon into being held, do so by offering him/her food in your hand.

Keep in mind that bearded dragons will often jump off of things (even if it's too high). So do not set your bearded dragon anywhere that's too high off the ground because he/she may jump and break a bone or injure themselves.

Letting Your Bearded Dragon out of Their Cage

Most owners will occasionally take their bearded dragon out of their cage for bonding, transporting, or just for fun. However, there are a few things you should consider when taking your bearded dragon from his/her environment.

Temperature and Humidity Issues
The temperature and humidity of your house will likely be far off from what bearded dragons consider comfortable. With this in mind, you should limit the amount of time your beardie stays outside their cage so it doesn't negatively affect their health.

Other Pets and Small Children
Make sure your bearded dragon is kept away from other pets (cats, dogs, etc.) and small children. Other pets can be seen as predators by your bearded dragon and can cause him/her to behave unpredictably and smaller children may not understand how to properly handle bearded dragons and could potentially injure them.

Other Things to Watch Out for
There are a number of things that can be dangerous for bearded dragons in our households. Below is a list of common things that can be dangerous for bearded dragons:

• Hot lights
• Bugs/household insects (they can contain parasites or pesticides)
• Piles of books, magazines, or anything else that could easily topple over
• Loose wiring, items that can become unplugged easily, and other electrical hazards
Bearded Dragon Nails / Claws

Occasionally a bearded dragon's nails may become overgrown and too long. This can be prevented by putting a rough surfaced item into their tank (such as a climbing rock) so their nails will wear down as they walk across and climb on it.

Bearded Dragon Health

Making sure your bearded dragon is healthy is one of the main responsibilities of a bearded dragon owner. Overall, bearded dragons are fairly healthy and will not require frequent medical assistance, but you still need to be familiar with potential health issues so you can ensure your bearded dragon is always healthy.

Skin Shedding

Bearded dragons will occasionally shed their skin. While younger bearded dragons will frequently shed their skin as they grow, adult beardies may only shed once or twice per year. The length of time it takes a bearded dragon to completely shed his/her skin is different for each bearded dragon. Some owners claim their bearded dragons seem to "burst" out of their skin a few hours while others take several days or more to completely finish their shed.

It's also not uncommon for beardies to shed in patches. They may shed their arm, leg, or tail separately from other parts of their body.

Keep in mind that your bearded dragon's mood may change when shedding. Shedding is very itchy for bearded dragons so their appetite and behavior may be completely different. Your calm beardie may start hissing and bearding whenever you get close and dragons with very healthy appetites may barely eat throughout their shed.
How to Tell When A Shed is About to Start
You can generally tell if a bearded dragon is about to start shedding by their color. Their color will begin to dull and their eyes may seem more puffed out. These are good signs and indicate a healthy shed.

During the Shed
It is important to keep your bearded dragon clean and hydrated throughout the shed. Keeping your beardie’s skin hydrated will make the shed easier and more comfortable. Frequent warm baths and misting with warm water can help keep their skin moist to aid with the shed (if misting, be sure to do outside the tank to prevent increasing the humidity levels within the tank).

As much as you may want to help, do not pull off any of their shedding skin. If you pull off any skin that's not ready to come off you can damage the new skin/scales. If the loose skin is absolutely driving you crazy, you can give your beardie a warm bath and gently rub the areas with loose skin using a very soft toothbrush or washcloth.

You should closely monitor the shedding at the end of their tail and toes. These locations are where the skin has trouble shedding naturally and if the skin doesn’t completely shed it can become tight and restrict blood flow to these areas causing tissue damage. To prevent this from happening you should help your beardie shed in these areas by keeping them damp and gently scrubbing with a very soft toothbrush or washcloth in the bath.

You can also help with the shedding by making sure that there is something rough that your beardie can rub against in their tank. A piece of wood or a rock will give him/her something to rub against to remove some loose skin or to scratch an itch.

Brumation
Most bearded dragons will go through a brumation cycle, which is kind of like a semi-hibernation cycle for bearded dragons. While not all bearded dragons will brumate, those that do will go though brumation during the fall or winter in response to the change in lighting or temperatures. Young beardies generally do not brumate and is something they start doing when they are at least one year old.

During brumation your bearded dragon will become less active, have a decreased appetite, and will sleep for much longer periods of time. Oftentimes owners will get concerned when their bearded dragon doesn’t seem to eat for days or weeks at a time, but you may be surprised to learn that even though the bearded dragon is not eating, they actually do not lose weight during brumation. In fact, one way to tell if your bearded dragon is having a healthy brumation cycle is to weigh them at the beginning and the end to see if there is any major difference in weight, because a loss in weight can indicate parasites or other health issues.
How Will My Bearded Dragon Act During Brumation
Every bearded dragon will behave differently before and during brumation. Some bearded dragons will
sleep deeply throughout the entire brumation cycle and others will take very long naps off and on.

Some bearded dragons may never brumate. Since brumation is generally triggered by a change in light
and temperature, people using automatic timers may never have their bearded dragon brumate.

What Should I Do When My Bearded Dragon Brumates?
Owners will sometimes get concerned about their bearded dragon’s lack of activity, appetite, and
change of mood. They will oftentimes try bathing their bearded dragon, waking them up to get them to
eat, or keeping the lights off to help them sleep.

It is best for you to let your bearded dragon do his/her thing without interruption. Many owners
claimed that waking their bearded dragon repeatedly during the brumation cycle caused it to last
significantly longer than previous cycles when they didn't wake their dragons.

You should, however, continue to give your bearded dragon fresh veggies, water, and turn on/off the
lights at the same times each day. Since some bearded dragons wake temporarily during their
brumation cycle, they may seek food and water and a little bit of basking.

It is also recommended to give your bearded dragon a bath one time per week during brumation. This
way they will stay hydrated.

How Long Will the Brumation Cycle Last?
Brumation can last anywhere from a few weeks to several months. If you’re concerned your bearded
dragon is brumating for too long, start weighing them to make sure they are not losing any weight. If
they are not losing any weight and are staying hydrated, then let them sleep.

Signs of a Sick Bearded Dragon

Once you have gotten used to your bearded dragon's behavior and personality it will be easy for you to
tell if something is wrong just by the change in their mood or behavior. Below are some things to
consider if you feel that your beardie is acting differently because of an illness.

Healthy Appearance
One of the first signs that your beardie may not be feeling well is by looking at their appearance. Sick
bearded dragons will often be duller in color and may be more grumpy than usual. If their mouth or
joints appear to be swollen or if you can see any unusual fluids around their eyes or mouth it can be a
sign of health issues.
Activeness / Energy
Healthy bearded dragons should keep their head perked up if they're awake and they should be very alert. If your bearded dragon is moving more slowly, doesn't respond quickly to people approaching the tank, or seems a bit more lazy than normal; it can be a sign that your beardedie isn't feeling well. Of course, if you suspect he/she is going through or about to start a brumation cycle, then this would be acceptable behavior.

Bearded Dragon Health Issues

Even though bearded dragons are generally healthy and hardy animals, they can still have health issues. This section will go over some of the most common bearded dragon health issues, how to diagnose them, and what you need to do.

Dehydration
Since bearded dragons live in near-desert conditions (high heat and low humidity), proper hydration is very important. Dehydration can occur when the bearded dragon's health is negatively affected by not receiving enough water.

You can tell if your bearded dragon is dehydrated by gently pinching their skin with your fingers, pulling back a bit, and letting go. If the skin doesn't immediately lie flat after releasing it can indicate your bearded dragon is suffering from dehydration.

Symptoms of Dehydration
- The bearded dragon perks up after drinking
- Loss of appetite
- Lack of energy
- Wrinkled skin
- Sunken eyes

Causes of Dehydration
Bearded dragons will get most of their water from the vegetables they eat and the baths you give them. If the greens, veggies, and/or fruit you give your bearded dragon are low in moisture or if they become dried out (from the high heat and low humidity in your beardie's tank), they may not supply enough water for your bearded dragon.

Some bearded dragons hate baths and/or don't drink while they're being bathed. If this is normal for your bearded dragon, you may consider using an eye dropper to drip water droplets on the tip of your bearded dragon's mouth while he/she is in their tank. Usually, bearded dragons will drink these water drops.

» Click Here to See Recommended Hydration Products for Bearded Dragons
Treatments
The best treatment for dehydration is to get your bearded dragon to drink as quickly as possible by giving your beardie foods that are high in water content, bathing, or by using an eye dropper to simulate dew on the tip of their nose.

Besides water you can also use Pedialyte or sports drinks such as Powerade diluted 1:1 with water to try to rehydrate your bearded dragon.

Diarrhea
Diarrhea is where your bearded dragon's fecal matter is not solid and is very liquidly.

Symptoms
• Regular non-solid liquedly stools

Causes of Diarrhea
Bacteria – Bacteria from spoiled or contaminated food can cause diarrhea and other health issues in bearded dragons.

Diet – An improper diet can cause diarrhea in bearded dragons. Food items such as iceberg lettuce, cabbage, and other non-nutritious greens can cause diarrhea. Another cause can be a sudden change in diet which can cause digestive stress.

Parasites – Parasites are another common cause of diarrhea in bearded dragons. You should get your bearded dragon checked annually for parasites. Coccida and pinworms are the most common parasites that cause diarrhea in beardies. Insects purchased at bait shops and insects found outside commonly carry parasites and should not be fed to your bearded dragon.

Over-hydration – One of the symptoms of a bearded dragon drinking too much water is loose watery stools.

Stress – Stress can cause diarrhea in all animals. It can be a change in environment, a move, or anything else that makes the bearded dragon feel uncomfortable.

Treatments
Before you start treating your beardie for diarrhea you need to do a few things. The first thing you need to do is to make sure he/she is properly hydrated since diarrhea can cause minor to serious dehydration in bearded dragons. You should also thoroughly clean the inside of your bearded dragon's tank to remove any bacteria that may have made your beardie ill.

Most cases of diarrhea are temporary and will go away fairly quickly. However, if your bearded dragon is regularly having diarrhea you should get his/her fecal matter checked for parasites. You can do this by
either tanking your bearded dragon to a vet or by collecting a fecal sample and taking that to the vet to get checked.

**Droopy Eyelids / Droopy Eyes / Bloodhound Eyes**
Droopy eyes is where one or both of your bearded dragon's eyes seem to droop (similar to how a bloodhound's eyes will droop).

**Symptoms**
- One or both eyes will droop

**Causes of Droopy Eyes**
Droopy eyes can be caused by kidney and organ issues.

**Treatments**
If you notice one of both of your bearded dragon's eyes drooping, you should seek the advice of a local vet experienced with reptiles.

**Hypervitaminosis A (Too Much Vitmain-A)**
Bearded dragons need vitamins, but some vitamins can become toxic if the bearded dragon is ingesting too much. Hypervitaminosis A is one of the most common vitamin overdoses that bearded dragons get.

**Symptoms**
- Swollen eyes
- Swollen throat
- Swollen body
- Lack of energy

**Causes of Hypervitaminosis A**
Bearded dragons in captivity get their vitamins from two different sources. Vegetables and vitamin supplements. When bearded dragons eat vegetables, the veggies contain beta carotene which is converted to vitamin A during the digestion process. The bearded dragon's body then absorbs the vitamin A as needed. Bearded dragons cannot overdose on vitamin A from eating too many vegetables because if their body doesn't need any additional vitamin A, they will simply excrete the beta carotene in their urine or fecal matter before converting it to vitamin A.

Bearded dragons that are given vitamin supplements that contain artificial or synthetic vitamin-A are at a much higher risk of suffering from hypervitaminosis A. Since synthetic vitamin-A cannot be excreted in the urine and must be absorbed by the bearded dragon's body, they can easily overdose if they have previously met their daily needs for vitamin-A.

This is why it is recommended to use multivitamins that contain beta carotene and not synthetic vitamin A. Since these vitamins allow bearded dragon's to excrete any unneeded vitamins, they pose no risk for overdosing on vitamin-A.

» [Click Here to See Recommended Vitamin A Multivitamins](#)
Treatment
If you suspect your bearded dragon is overdosing on vitamin A, the first thing you should do is to stop giving your bearded dragon vitamin A supplements. You should then contact your local vet for medical advice. Sometimes, reducing your bearded dragon's vitamin A intake and making sure they are hydrated enough to flush out the excess vitamin A will have your bearded dragon feeling better within a few days.

Hypothiaminosis (Lack of Vitamin B1)
Hypothiaminosis is where your bearded dragon doesn't get enough thiamine (vitamin B1) in their diet and they start to get ill from the deficiency.

Symptoms
- Muscle twitches
- Trimmers

Causes of Hypothiaminosis
Bearded dragons receive most of their vitamin B1 from greens and vegetables. If the greens and veggies you feed your bearded dragon were bought frozen they will not have as many nutrients as fresh vegetables. Likewise, each day your vegetables are stored they lose more of their nutritional value.

Treatment
Severe cases of Hypothiaminosis need to be treated by a qualified herp vet. Since the symptoms of Hypothiaminosis are very similar to the symptoms of metabolic bone disease the vet will be able to properly diagnose the illness.

Minor cases of Hypothiaminosis can be treated by feeding your bearded dragon fresh vegetables and greens which are high in vitamin B1.

Impaction
Impaction is where a bearded dragon's digestive system has a blockage caused by a solid or semi-solid mass (such as food, substrate, or any other ingested particles). It can be caused by feeding a bearded dragon insects/foods which are too large, accidental ingestion of substrate, or feeding a bearded dragon in temperatures which are too low for him/her to properly digest the food.

Impaction can easily be avoided by using the correct type of substrate and monitoring the food you feed your bearded dragon(s).

Symptoms
- Constipation or straining when trying to use the bathroom
- Lack of movement in the rear legs
- Leg trembles
• Bump on the back near the spine
• Regurgitation

Causes of Impaction

A general rule of thumb is that bearded dragons should not be fed insects, fruits, or vegetables that are wider than the space between the bearded dragon's eyes. Anything larger than the space between their eyes will be difficult for them to digest and can cause impaction.

Accidental substrate ingestion is probably the leading cause of impaction. Many loose substrates such as sand, wood chips, or anything else that is composed of small loose particles/pieces can be accidentally ingested by bearded dragons when eating or when they are exploring their environment (some bearded dragons will lick everything in their tank to learn what it is).

Bearded dragons also need high temperatures to digest their food. In order for them to digest their food properly the temperature of their basking spot needs to be between 100°F to 110°F (37-43°C). If a bearded dragon is fed food that is difficult for them to digest and if their basking spot is not a high enough temperature, it can also cause impaction.

Signs of Impaction

The first sign of impaction is constipation in a bearded dragon. Beardies should be on a fairly regular bathroom schedule (especially if they've been eating well with no change in appetite), so if your beardie has gone longer than normal without defecating, it can be a sign of impaction.

A sign of a more serious case of impaction is partial or full paralysis of a bearded dragon's hind legs. Since the digestive track lies against the mid and upper spine, blockages can put pressure on the spine causing temporary or long-term paralysis of the hind legs. If the blockage is large enough it can put pressure on the upper spine as well causing paralysis of the front legs. The first sign of paralysis can be a small loss of mobility or total lack of movement in one or both hind legs to the point where the legs are dragging behind the bearded dragon when he/she moves.

A bump or lump near the spine along the back can also be another sign of a more serious case of impaction. The bump/lump is often accompanied with partial to full paralysis in the hind legs.

Treatments

All cases of impaction should be treated immediately because of the risks of permanent paralysis.

Minor Impaction Treatment – Minor cases of impaction can be treated by giving your bearded dragon a warm bath in water that's 95-100°F (35-46°C) for 10-15 minutes. While bathing your dragon, very gently massage his/her stomach with your fingers (while in the water) for a few minutes. If the impaction was minor or caused by being too cold this treatment should help your beardedie pass the blockage within 24 hours. If your bearded's impaction is severe or if he/she has not used the bathroom from the method above you will need to use other treatments.
Seeking Veterinary Care – If your bearded dragon's impaction is severe or if you don't feel comfortable trying to get your bearded dragon to pass the impaction yourself, you should seek the assistance of an experienced vet. The treatment the vet uses will depend on the severity and cause of the impaction. It's not uncommon for vets to take x-rays of the bearded dragon to get a better idea of where the impaction is and what may have caused it.

**Metabolic Bone Disease**
Metabolic bone disease is a serious illness that weakens the bones of your bearded dragon making them weak and ill.

**Symptoms**
- Bumps in the legs that you can feel and/or see
- Muscle tremors, twitches, spasms
- Swollen bottom jaw
- Jerky movements
- Bumps in the vertical columns of the back and tail

**Causes**
Metabolic bone disease can be caused by improper UV lighting and/or a lack of vitamins and minerals including Calcium, Vitamin D3, or Phosphorous.

**Treatment**
If you think your bearded dragon is suffering from Metabolic Bone Disease you should contact your vet so they can determine the severity of the illness and recommend treatments specifically for your bearded dragon.

Most treatments involve making sure your bearded dragon has new and appropriate UV lighting for their tank and making sure they are getting enough vitamins and minerals though multivitamins.

» Click Here to See Recommended UV Light Bulbs
» Click Here to See Recommended Multivitamins for Bearded Dragons

**Mouth Rot**
Mouth rot is an infection that occurs in your bearded dragon's mouth causing a whitish/yellowish fluid to form in the tissues of the mouth.

**Symptoms**
- Swollen mouth
- Loose teeth
- Yellowish/White substance appears in and around your bearded dragon's mouth
- Decreased appetite
- Bleeding gums
Causes
Most cases of mouth rot are caused by dirty living conditions and/or low tank temperatures.

Treatment
Since mouth rot is an infection it will need to be treated by a vet with herp experience. Generally treatment will involve the use of antibiotics and mouth rinse solutions to clean the mouth.

Paralysis
Paralysis is a concern for every bearded dragon because it can be caused by an impacted digestive system. Generally paralysis in bearded dragons is most common in the rear legs, but severe cases can also affect the front legs as well.

Symptoms of Paralysis
- Lack of movement in one or more limbs (most commonly the rear legs)
- Rear legs are extended behind their body (and they don't move their legs when you touch their toes)

Causes of Paralysis
Nearly all cases of paralysis in bearded dragons is caused either by the bearded dragon being fed insects or food that is too large to digest or by accidentally eating loose substrate. Since the bearded dragon’s digestive track runs along a portion of their spine there’s a risk of food passing through the intestines putting pressure on the spine and causing temporary or permanent paralysis. There is a higher risk of paralysis if the bearded dragon is in a tank with loose substrate or if they are being fed insects or foods that are wider than the distance between their eyes.

Treatment
If you suspect your bearded dragon has eaten food that's too large, you can attempt to prevent excess pressure from being placed on the spine by keeping them off their stomach. Some owners will use a towel to support their bearded dragon off the ground. Generally they will place the towel beneath the basking light and will cut a hole in the towel that lets their stomach hang freely which relives pressure from the spine.

If your bearded dragon is having mobility issues you should contact a vet as soon as possible, because fast treatment can sometimes reverse the paralysis.

Swollen / Puffed Out Eyes
Swollen eyes look just like it sounds. It is where a bearded dragon's eyes, eyelids, or the skin around the eyes seem a bit swollen or abnormally large.

Causes of Swollen / Puffed Out Eyes
Shedding – When a bearded dragon sheds they will need to loosen the skin around their eyes by puffing out their eyes when they are closed. This can look very bizarre and abnormal to inexperienced owners, but is completely normal in the shedding process.

Infection – When one eye (or both eyes) are swollen it can also be a sign of an eye infection. If your bearded dragon is not shedding and his/her eye is swollen or larger than normal, you should seek medical advice from an experienced herp vet. Untreated eye infections can lead to blindness, detached retinas, or removal of the eyeball.

Mites/Parasites – Mites and parasites can also cause swollen eyes. However, it is rare for them to infect the eyes of captive bearded dragons.

Treatment of Swollen / Puffed Out Eyes
If the bearded dragon is shedding, then he/she should appear normal once the skin around their eyes has shed. If your bearded dragon is not shedding, you should seek medical advice from a herp vet.

Upper Respiratory Infection
Respiratory infections are rare in bearded dragons, but can be caused if they are living in improper conditions (low temperatures, high humidity, etc.).

Symptoms
- Gaping their mouth (keeping their mouth open because they cannot receive enough air from their nostrils)
- Visible breathing difficulties
- Excess mucus around the mouth and nostrils
- Puffing/swelling their body and/or throat

Causes
Bearded dragons exposed to low tank temperatures or an environment where the humidity is too high are more likely to get upper respiratory infections.

Treatment
Respiratory infections restrict the breathing of bearded dragons so they should be treated immediately by a local vet.

Overheating
Overheating occurs when the inside temperature of the tank become too hot and the bearded dragon is unable to cool themselves from the extreme heat. Even though bearded dragons have adapted to live in extreme heat, overheating is very serious and can be fatal to healthy bearded dragons.

Symptoms
- Gaping
- The temperature in the cool side of the tank is above 105°F
**Causes**

Overheating can be caused by a number of things including: Placing your bearded dragon's tank too close to a window, fireplace, heater, or any other extreme heat/light source. Using too large of a heat lamp for your bearded dragon's tank.

**Treatment**

Adjust the temperatures in the tank by turning off one or more of the heat sources until the tank is at the right temperature. You can also bathe your bearded dragon (see the bathing directions) so they can cool down and hydrate themselves.

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**Missing Body Parts**

It's not uncommon for people inexperienced with reptiles to assume that all lizards can regenerate missing appendages. However, this is not the case. In fact, bearded dragons cannot re-grow any missing body parts. If your bearded dragon loses a tail, foot, or limb he/she will not be able to regrow that body part and will have to live the rest of their life without having that appendage.

**Most Common Missing Body Parts**

It is not uncommon for a bearded dragon to be missing a toe or the very tip of their tail. This can occur from aggression with other bearded dragons or from a previous shed restricting the blood flow to these areas.

It generally isn't considered a major problem if a bearded dragon is missing a toe or the tip of their tail because it will not hinder their movement or daily activities in any way.

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**Vets**

You should take your bearded dragon to the vet at least once every year for a routine checkup. This checkup will ensure your bearded dragon is indeed healthy and will give you the opportunity to ask the vet any medical related questions pertaining to your bearded dragon.

**Choosing a Reptile Vet**

It is important to only take your bearded dragon to a vet that has experience with reptiles. Most veterinarians are under qualified to provide medical care for reptiles and other exotic animals since veterinary schools usually only spend 1-6 weeks total discussing all the species of reptiles, birds, and fish. Fortunately, most vets will tell you if they are not experienced in reptiles and would be more than happy to recommend a vet with the proper qualifications to take care of your bearded dragon.

When choosing a vet the first place to look is your local herp society. These are societies of reptile enthusiasts who would have excellent recommendations for the best vets to use. You can also look at
the ARAV (Association of Reptilian and Amphibian Veterinarians) website which has a listing of many reptilian vets (http://www.arav.org/find-a-vet/).

Most vets that specialize in reptiles will also have experience with other exotic animals such as fish, amphibians, or birds.

Bearded Dragon Behavior

Most animals have certain body language and behaviors to indicate their mood, health, and feelings. Bearded dragons don’t mimic other animals or each other, so their behavior accurately expresses their current mood. Bearded dragons will often behave differently if threatened, in response to their environment, in the presence of another bearded dragon, or if they see a potential mate.

Aggression

Bearded dragons are usually very tame and non-aggressive animals, however they can become aggressive if they are provoked. Below are the most common signs of aggression in bearded dragons:

**Head Bobbing** – A bearded dragon will begin to repeatedly move their head up and down as a sign of territorial aggression towards one another. Occasionally a bearded dragon may thrust his/her head up and down so aggressively that you may be concerned he/she will injure themselves, don't worry though because this is normal behavior.

**Fluffing Their Beard** – A bearded dragon will fluff their beard to make themselves appear bigger so whatever's threatening them or making them uncomfortable will leave them alone.

**Hissing** – A bearded dragon may also give a warning hiss to let people, beardies, and other animals know not to mess with them.

**Biting** – If a bearded dragon feels threatened he/she may attempt to bite whatever's provoking them. It is most common for bearded dragons to bite their owner's fingers or hands. Generally, bearded dragon's don't have very serious bites, but they can draw blood so if you fear your bearded dragon may bite you, put on some gloves to prevent him/her from injuring you. If your bearded dragon does bite you, be sure to clean the area to prevent any type of infection.
**Body Language**

The main way bearded dragons communicate with each other is via body language. Since bearded dragons are not verbal they have to rely on body movements and posture to communicate to other bearded dragons. By paying close attention you can tell what your bearded dragon is thinking or his/her mood by their body language. This section will go over the reasons for each different type of body language.

**Arm Waving**
Arm waving is where a bearded dragon will stand high on three legs and will wave the remaining leg in circles in the air.

There can be two meanings when bearded dragons wave. The first meaning is that it can be species recognition. So a bearded dragon may wave at another bearded dragon just to show that he/she recognizes the other dragon and is aware of their presence.

The other meaning is submission. When a bearded dragon waves its arm at an approaching bearded dragon or another large animal it is generally to show submission. Sometimes bearded dragons will copy you if you wave your arm at it first.

**Bearding / Fluffing Their Beard**
Bearded dragons are called "bearded" because both the skin around the bearded dragon's neck can puff out resembling a beard. Most of the time bearded dragons will expand their beard as defensive behavior to make themselves appear bigger to any potential threat. However, sometimes a bearded dragon will fluff his/her beard without being threatened or provoked. Both males and females can fluff their beard and when they do so it can get much darker in coloring. Generally the darker the coloring the more excited the bearded dragon is.

**Biting**
Biting is an obvious sign of aggression from bearded dragons. Bearded dragons that are unfamiliar with being handled may try to bite their owners hands when they are being touched. If your bearded dragon is showing this behavior, simply put on some gloves to protect your hands when handling your beardie. Eventually he/she will get used to you and will stop being aggressive when handled.

If your bearded dragon is aggressive when being handled, you should gradually try to get him/her used to being handled by people. Failure to do this will prevent you from being able to bond as closely as you could with your bearded dragon and it makes it more difficult for other people, such as vets, to handle your dragon as well.
Digging
Bearded dragons that have loose substrate in their cage will sometimes dig a hole. They will dig holes to create a more comfortable basking spot, to help regulate their temperature during brumation, or if they're female they will dig holes to lay eggs.

Flattening Their Body
When bearded dragon's press themselves against the ground to flatten their body, it makes their scales and spines pop out making themselves look larger and very sharp. They may do this if they're feeling threatened and want to show the predators around them that they would be a very difficult and prickly meal covered in spines. Sometimes bearded dragons will flatten their body when they are sunbathing. They do this to increase the surface area of their body so they can absorb more light and heat.

Gaping / Holding Their Mouth Open
A bearded dragon will remain still with his/her mouth open (gaped) for a few reasons.

The most common reason bearded dragons gape their mouths is to help regulate their body temperature. Bearded dragons do not sweat, so they regulate their body's temperature by opening their mouth to cool down. It is common to see bearded dragons gape their mouths when they are basking under the basking light.

Bearded dragon will also gape their mouths if they are having respiratory issues. If a bearded dragon has an upper respiratory infection from the humidity being too high in the tank, they may not be able to breathe properly without keeping their mouth open.

If a bearded dragon is feeling threatened or is fluffing their beard for a mate, they may also gape their mouths to show off their teeth.

If you hand-feed your bearded dragon, he/she may begin to approach you with their mouths open. Keep in mind that this would be a newly learned behavior and he/she is not threatening you. They are simply approaching with the mindset that they are about to eat.

Head Bobbing
Head bobbing is when a bearded dragon will repeatedly raise and lower his/her head. It is considered a sign of dominance and is more common among male bearded dragons.

Males will often head bob to show their size and dominance when trying to mate with a female. They may also head bob as a way of saying "I see you, this is my territory" when another bearded dragon/animal gets too close to their territory. The faster the head moves up and down, the more threatening. Faster head bobs are usually for territorial reasons while slow head bobs can be a sign of submission. Bearded dragons can bob their head up and down very quickly, so fast that you may think he/she will hurt themselves, but this is actually normal behavior.
Hissing
Bearded dragons will hiss when they feel threatened. If they are hissing it means they want to be left alone and can be considered a sign of aggression.

Lying on Top of Each Other
It may look cute when you see one or more bearded dragons lying on top of each other, but it’s actually a sign of dominance. Since bearded dragon's need UV rays to remain healthy the dominate dragon will often lie on top of the submitting dragon to purposefully prevent them from getting UV rays.

Sometimes bearded dragons will also lie on top of each other to get even closer to the basking light.

Tail Wagging
Not all bearded dragons will wag their tails, but when they do it can be an indicator of their mood. Tail wagging is when your bearded dragon will wag his/her tail back and forth.

Bearded dragon owners often claim their beardies will wag their tails when hunting insects or if they are stressed by your presence.

Tongue Flicking
Like snakes, bearded dragons have a Jacobson's gland, so bearded dragons will occasionally flick their tongue to explore their environment. It’s not unusual for a bearded dragon to explore an item by licking it with their tongue. Each time they flick/lick with their tongue they are gathering information about that item on the tip of their tongue and then rub it against the Jacobson’s gland inside their mouth.

Changing Color
Occasionally a bearded dragon will darken his/her color. This can be done to help them to absorb more heat since darker colors absorb heat better than lighter colors.

What to Do If...
This section of the manual includes bearded dragon information that couldn’t easily be included in any of the other parts of this guide. All of these situations are questions we have been commonly asked.

What to Do if Your Bearded Dragon Doesn't Come Out of His/Her Hide?
Bearded dragons will stay in their hide for many reasons, including: they are feeling vulnerable and want the security the hide offers, they are tired and want rest, they are afraid of a particular noise, person, or pet and are hiding, they are brumating.
It's easy to get concerned if you feel your bearded dragon is spending too much time in his/her hide, but you shouldn't disturb them unless you feel they are sick or stuck in their hide.

**What to Do if You want to use Wood and other Outdoor Items as Cage Decorations?**

Many bearded dragon owners will use pieces of wood and rocks found outside for decoration within their bearded dragon's tank. This is perfectly fine and is an inexpensive way to have a naturally beautiful habitat for your bearded dragon. However, there are a few things you will want to do.

**Pieces of Wood/Driftwood/Branches/Limbs**

First off, you need to make sure that there are no loose pieces that can come off within your bearded dragon's tank. So you will want to strip off all the bark and small twigs from any pieces of wood you have. You will also want to avoid using strong smelling wood (like cedar). Many reptile owners feel the oils that produce the scent are unhealthy for bearded dragons.

Next you should scrub off the wood to remove any mud, dirt, moss, or anything else that needs to come off. Once you've finished this step you will need to kill any bacteria or parasites that may be living in the wood. You can do this by boiling the wood in a large pot for an hour. You can also bake the wood in your oven at a low heat (250-300°F) for 40 minutes. When baking the wood, occasionally check it to make sure it's not smoldering.

When you've finished sanitizing the wood, let it sit for a few hours to completely cool down before placing it inside your bearded dragon's tank.

**Rocks, Stones, and Small Boulders**

You will want to start by removing any smaller loose pieces of rock from the larger stone. Next you should thoroughly clean off the stones with a brush and water to remove any dirt, mud, or anything else that needs to come off.

The last step is killing any parasites or bacteria that may be living on or within the small crevices of the rock. **DO NOT BOIL THE ROCKS.** Rocks can have water within them that can make them explode when they get too hot. Instead you should sanitize your rock by putting the rock in a bucket and pouring boiling water over it. The boiling water should quickly cool when it comes in contact with the rock so if the stone does have water inside, it won't explode. The water should stay hot enough to kill any bacteria and parasites living in or on the stone. You can also sanitize the rock by putting it in a bucket of rubbing alcohol and letting it sit for 40 minutes.

When you've finished sanitizing the rock you will want to let it sit overnight to make sure it's completely dry before placing it into your bearded dragon's tank. You don't want a wet rock to increase the humidity of the tank.

**What to Do if the Tank's Humidity is too High?**

If your bearded dragon tank's humidity is above 50% it is getting too high and needs to be lowered. The first step in decreasing the tank's humidity level is figuring out what's causing the high humidity. The following list contains things to look at when trying to decrease the humidity of the tank:
Tank Lid
Your bearded dragon's tank lid should allow fresh air in and out of the tank. If the lid on your beardie's tank is solid and there is no way for moisture to get out of the tank it can cause a higher humidity level. You can fix this by adjusting the lid so more fresh air can get into the tank.

Too Much Water Inside the Tank
You can also cause an increase in humidity if you mist your bearded dragon inside his/her tank or if you provide a very large water bowl within the tank. Try misting your beardie outside of the tank to decrease the excess moisture within the tank. If you provide a water dish, make sure your bearded dragon is indeed using it because many beardies don't use their water bowls and the extra water in the tank increases the humidity.

Breeding Bearded Dragons

Whether you're breeding as a hobby, extra money, or just to create beautiful bearded dragon morphs you need to make sure you do everything correctly to ensure a healthy clutch of bearded dragons. This section is a great start if you're planning on breeding bearded dragons.

Should You Breed Bearded Dragons?

Before you start making plans to breed bearded dragons you should first consider whether or not you should do it. Breeding bearded dragons comes with a lot of additional responsibilities that may not fit into your budget, time, or space requirements. Below is a list of things to consider before you begin breeding beardies.

- Do you have bearded dragons to mate?
  - Where will you get the other bearded dragon to mate?
  - Does the other bearded dragon have good vet records?
- Bearded dragons can have 20+ babies and you will need to keep them for 5-8 weeks to make sure they are doing well before you can sell them.
  - Do you have the space needed for all these hatchlings?
  - Can you afford to feed all these babies while they are rapidly growing?
  - Do you have the time required to monitor the bearded dragon babies?
- Where are you going to find homes for all the babies?
  - Are you going to give them away? Bearded dragons are a large responsibility and giving away bearded dragons to families without experience can do more harm than good.
Also keep in mind that the demand for bearded dragons is not high enough that you will always be able to make a profit. Eventually you should be able to sell all the bearded dragons, but the income you make selling them may not always cover the costs of electricity, food, and time required to raise them.

**When to Start Breeding Bearded Dragons?**

Bearded dragons will reach their sexual maturity when they are around 12-20 months of age. It is this time that they will begin to display behavior indicating their sexual maturity.

**Males** – Males will become more dominate and will bob their heads more frequently and may beard or darken their beards.

**Females** – Females will have a more submissive behavior and will begin to lay eggs (even if there is no male around). Since females will start laying eggs before they are fully grown, it is recommended to wait until they are larger before breeding them since reproduction places a large amount of stress on the females. This way the stress of reproduction doesn't have a negative effect on her growth or health.

**Planning for Breeding**

Breeding bearded dragons has to be properly planned to ensure everything goes well and as expected. First off, you're going to need to make sure you have at least 1 to 3 female bearded dragons to mate with the male.

**Before Breeding**

Breeding can be stressful for the female bearded dragon's body so it's recommended to take your beardedie to get a checkup 6 months or so before the breeding season starts to make sure your bearded dragons are in top health for breeding. You will want to make sure that the female is healthy enough to be able to create and provide nourishment for the clutch of eggs she will lay and the male is healthy enough to have a high sperm count.

**When Do Bearded Dragon's Breed**

Like most animals, bearded dragons will breed in the early spring to early summer. In the Northern Hemisphere this is usually February to April. In the Southern Hemisphere it’s generally September to March. However, bearded dragons are triggered to breed by the light cycles so they can be induced to breeding by adjusting the light cycle of their tank to mimic the photoperiod of early spring (which is usually 14 hours of light to 10 hours of darkness).

**Introducing the Bearded Dragons to Each Other**

If you keep your bearded dragons in a large tank together, there won't be any need for introductions. However, most people will have bearded dragons in separate tanks so the bearded dragons will all need to be slowly introduced before breeding.
To do this, it is recommend to move the bearded dragons to tanks close to each other so they can see each other. When you do this the male bearded dragon should display dominate behavior such as head bobbing, seeming more aggressive, making himself look larger. His coloring may get richer and generally the females will display submissive behavior in response.

Eventually you will need to place the bearded dragons you're going to mate into one large single tank. This tank should be setup similar to your other tanks (same temperature, substrate, etc.). When you first place the bearded dragons together the male will display a lot of dominate behavior, which may frighten the females which will make them run and hide. But it's important to let the bearded dragons get to know each other. At the end of the first day, remove all the bearded dragons and place them back into their own individual tanks. You should continue this courting process for the next few weeks (it can take up to three weeks for breeding to occur).

If you're Breeding 1 Female with 1 Male
Male bearded dragons can become very persistent when it comes to mating. It's not uncommon for the male to provoke her or breed with her on a frequent enough basis that the female doesn't have time for rest, food, or sunbathing. Because of this it's recommended to remove the male bearded dragon from the female at night and for one hour during the day. This should give the female bearded dragon time to rest.

If you're Breeding Multiple Females with 1 Male
It's not uncommon for bearded dragon breeders to place one male among a group of 2 or 3 female bearded dragons. Female bearded dragons can generally coexist with each other without being aggressive with each other (especially when they're older). Under no circumstances should you place two or more male bearded dragons in the same tank. If you do breed 1 male with multiple female bearded dragons, be sure that the habitat they're in is large enough for all of them.

The advantage of breeding 1 male with multiple females is that the male will have multiple female bearded dragons to take up his attention. This will give the other females more time to rest/eat/sunbathe.

The Breeding Process

During courtship and breeding, both sexes will show a decreased appetite as they will mostly be focused on breeding; however it is important to continue to provide your bearded dragons with fresh food daily and to make sure they stay hydrated.

By nature, female bearded dragons will only breed with the largest, healthiest, and otherwise best male she can find. Usually in captivity females will breed with the male that's courting her, however sometimes the female will not allow a male to breed with her. If this happens, then you will have to find another male to breed because you cannot force the female to breed with a male she doesn't want.
When the female allows the male to breed with her the female will stand still and the male will bite her on the back of the neck to firmly hold her. The female will then raise her tail and the male will insert one of his hemipenes into her vent. When finished, the male will let go of the female and she will run away. It is important that you make sure the bite(s) on the back of the female's neck are not too serious. The male can sometimes be too rough and cut the back of the female's neck with his teeth. If she appears to be injured you can treat it by washing the skin and putting on antibiotic ointment. If you feel the wounds need stitches then you should seek a local vet.

If the male is left in the same tank as the female, you can expect him to mate with her a few times per day. This is why it's sometimes important to separate the male from the female at night and for an hour or so during the day so she can have time to rest.

Female bearded dragons can retain the male's sperm in her body long enough to produce a few clutches of eggs. So it is not necessary to breed the female before each clutch, however the earlier clutches will contain a higher percentage of fertile eggs than the later clutches.

**Gestation and Egg Lying**

After the female has mated her body will produce the fertile eggs and she will begin to provide nourishment to the eggs until they are ready to be laid. During this time she will need a healthy diet so she can supply the nutrition to the eggs without it negatively affecting her health.

Calcium, protein, and fat are all important for her while she develops the eggs. As the eggs develop she will get larger and the eggs will leave less room for food in her stomach, so her appetite may decrease. However, it's important to continue feeding her.

Keep in mind that you will need to be more careful with her when she's carrying eggs. You shouldn't pick her up by her abdomen and don't let anyone be too rough with her or let her jump off anything too high (which can damage the fragile eggs). You may want to reorganize her tank so she can have easier access to her favorite spots.

Eventually you may be able to see the outline of the eggs in her abdomen. You will want to make sure she has somewhere to lay her eggs. In the wild, female bearded dragons will dig holes and tunnels in the ground to lay eggs. Because of this you will need to give her something to satisfy her digging instinct to lay her eggs. Failure to do this can cause your bearded dragon to refuse to lay her eggs which can lead to egg-binding (which can become very serious).

**Creating the Nest**

You will want to give your bearded dragon a place to dig to lay her eggs. Many bearded dragon owners recommend a plastic container (with a lid) large enough to fit inside her tank (about 2x3 feet in size). You should cut a hole into the side of the container large enough for her to get inside (you may want to coat the edges of the hole with tape so she doesn't cut herself squeezing into the container). Inside the plastic container you should place 8+ inches of sand mixed with Vermiculite or Hatchrite. You should then moisten the soil in the container enough so she can dig a tunnel without it collapsing on her. If you don't have enough room for the container to fit inside the tank you can pile the soil against the glass of one side of the tank.
After you pack and moisten the soil you can try to dig a shallow hole with your fingers to trigger her digging instinct. Many owners claim their beardie will continue the hole they started. When the female does dig the hole, she may make a tunnel, turn around, and have the tip of her head sticking out of the entrance as she lays her eggs. Once she has laid her eggs she will cover them with soil using her back feet and will exit the tunnel. Some bearded dragons will collapse the tunnel as they leave.

If your bearded dragon doesn't lay her eggs it can be a sign that she is egg-bound. This is where she physically cannot lay her eggs. Symptoms include not having a place to lay eggs (no nesting box, not enough soil, etc.), signs of distress, and suddenly stopping laying eggs when it appears she hasn't laid all her eggs. If you suspect she may be egg bound, you should contact your local herp vet for assistance as they may need to perform an operation to remove the eggs.

After she has laid her eggs her stomach will appear deflated (similar to a flat tire). She will also be very weak, so it's important that you provide her with healthy food and nutrients so she can regain her strength quickly.

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Incubating the Eggs

After the female has laid her eggs, she will not want anything to do with them. At this point it is up to you to ensure the eggs are in the ideal environment so you can have as many healthy beardies as possible. The best way to do this is to gather the eggs and place them in an incubator.

Before you move the eggs, you should have the incubator setup, ready, and tested. It is important that the eggs maintain a constant temperature so you should have the temperature preset to the correct temperature before you move the eggs. It is recommended to incubate the bearded dragon eggs at a temperature of 84°F.

Moving the Eggs
Reptile eggs are soft, squishy, and very fragile (unlike bird eggs). When moving the eggs to the incubator you should very softly pick up the egg and place it into the incubator in the exact same position it was laid by the mother bearded dragon. It is important that you do not rotate the egg when transporting it to the incubator because rotating the reptile egg can cause damage to the developing embryo killing it (especially if it is rotated 24 hours after it's been laid).

Setting up the Incubator
There are two types of incubators that you can use. You can purchase a commercial incubator that only requires you to plug it into the wall and set the temperature (however these are fairly expensive). Or you can buy the parts and make an inexpensive incubator yourself at home. Homemade incubators are generally much less expensive, but are a bit more time consuming to setup.

Building an Incubator
Most hobby bearded dragon breeders will build their own incubator since they are much cheaper and work well for breeding smaller amounts of bearded dragons. There are many different incubator
designs that you can find online, but the design below is fairly easy and works well with bearded dragon eggs. If you don't like this design or want to build a different type of incubator, feel free to do so. Just make sure to keep the incubation temperature is 84°F (28-29°C) and that the humidity levels within the incubator are 70-80%.

**Supplies List**
- 1 Medium to Large Cooler » [Click Here to See Recommended Coolers]
- 1 Submersible Aquarium Heater » [Click Here to See Recommended Heaters]
- 2 Bricks
- Wire Rack
- 1-3 Tupperware Containers » [Click Here to See Recommended Containers]
- Digital Thermometer » [Click Here to See Recommended Thermometers]
- Humidity Sensor » [Click Here to See Recommended Humidity Gauges]
- Drill » [Click Here to See Recommended Drills]
- 1 Inch or 1½ Inch Drill Bit » [Click Here to See Recommended Drill Bits]
- Vermiculite » [Click Here to See Recommended Vermiculite]
- Waterproof Permanent Marker » [Click Here to See Recommended Waterproof Markers]

**Incubator Design Overview**
The way this incubator works is you will put a few inches of water in the bottom of the cooler and place the aquarium heater in the water. Unlike coil heaters, the water will evenly disperse the heat so you don't need any fans. Aquarium heaters have adjustable thermostats on them so you can easily get the temperature of the water to a specific temperature.

You will place the wire rack over the water (the two bricks will keep the wire rack from getting into the water). You will then put the Tupperware containers on top of the wire rack. Each Tupperware container will have vermiculite soil (to hold the eggs).

**Building and Using the Incubator**
Before starting, make sure everything fits into the cooler you're using. You don't want to start the project only to realize that the cooler isn't large enough for the wire rack or Tupperware containers to fit into it.

**Step 1)**
You're going to need enough water in the tank that the heater stays submerged (it's made for fish tanks so it's designed to stay underwater without posing any type of electrical hazards). Since water evaporates, you're going to need to add water to the incubator every few days. So the first thing you're going to need to do is to draw a line inside the cooler so you know what to keep the water level at. Generally a few inches of water will be enough, but you don't want the water so deep that the bricks are fully submerged and you don't want it so shallow that the aquarium heater isn't underwater.

**Step 2)**
Next you're going to want to drill 3-4 holes in the top of the cooler's lid. This is to let fresh air get in and out of the cooler (and should help to keep the humidity levels lower). It is best to drill the holes evenly across the top of the cooler lid so fresh air can get into the cooler more evenly. You should also
drill one hole into the side of the cooler for the heater and thermometer (if you're using an electric thermometer) cables. Make sure the hole is drilled a few inches above the water level (you don't want any water sloshing out of the hole).

Step 3)  
Next you should place the heater into the cooler and add water to the cooler (until it reaches the water line you drew with the marker). Then turn the heater on (set it to 84-87°F) and fasten it to the bottom of the cooler. Next you should place the two bricks in the bottom of the tank and set the wire rack on top of the bricks.

Step 4)  
Put a few inches of vermiculite into each of the Tupperware containers. Then punch holes or drill small holes into the lids of the Tupperware containers. Keep in mind that one of the Tupperware containers will contain a thermometer probe so make sure the probe can fit into the container.

Step 5)  
Set the Tupperware containers with the vermiculite on top of the wire rack and place the thermometer and humidity sensor into one of the containers. Close the cooler lid and occasionally adjust the thermostat of the aquarium heater until the temperature inside the Tupperware containers is 84°F.

Step 6)  
When you are ready to place the eggs into the incubator, moisten the vermiculite in each of the Tupperware containers. You don’t want them too wet, but moist enough that the vermiculite will retain its shape if you try to mold it. Then, using your finger, make an indentation for each egg and gently place each egg into the incubator being careful not to rotate the egg in the process. When you’ve placed the eggs into the vermiculite you will want to partially bury them in the vermiculite (just enough so a portion of the egg is still visible).

Incubator Maintenance  
You will want to check the incubator one or more times per day to make sure the temperature is consistent. You will also want to monitor the water level of the cooler to make sure it hasn’t all evaporated. When adding water to the cooler, you don’t want the water to be too cold or too hot. Ideally you want the water to be as close to the water temperature that’s already in the cooler as possible.

You will want to check the eggs themselves every day or two. If you suspect an egg is infertile, you should remove it from the tank. Infertile eggs will seem smaller and will be an off color or moldy looking. Fertile eggs will also feel more firm to the touch, while infertile eggs will be soft. When feeling the eggs, be extremely gentle. Even the slightest amount of pressure can kill the embryo so the eggs should by very carefully handled.

If your bearded dragon laid fertile eggs and the incubator was setup properly, you should have your first hatchlings make their appearance within 55-76 days.
Newborn Bearded Dragons

You should start getting ready for bearded dragons to hatch from their eggs after they've been incubating for 50 days.

When the Eggs Hatch
Before the eggs start hatching they may start to appear smaller, deflated, or have dimples in them. When they do start to hatch, do not help your beardies get out of their eggs. They need to be able to get out of the egg on their own as this is the final step to their development process. If you must help, you can do so by lightly misting the egg and the surrounding vermiculite to keep it moist. Keep in mind that it can take some bearded dragons a few hours to hatch while it can take others a few days.

After Hatching
After a bearded dragon hatches from his/her egg, you may notice that they still have part of their yolk sac attached. This is normal, and you should not try to remove it. The yolk sac will supply crucial vitamins and nutrients to the bearded dragon over the next day or so and will fall off when it is depleted. The bearded dragon babies will also be completely exhausted after they hatch. They will be very still or may even appear like they are playing dead. Keep them in the incubator until they are mobile and moving around. When they start moving around, remove them from the incubator and place them into a separate container setup for baby bearded dragons.

Setting Up Bearded Dragon Nurseries
You will need to have a separate habitat for your baby bearded dragons as they cannot live in the same enclosure as their mother or any other adult bearded dragon. Most people don't have the resources or space to have a separate habitat for each bearded dragon, so they will put every 3-5 baby bearded dragons into their own 20 gallon enclosure.

Fortunately, Rubbermaid containers are fairly inexpensive and work best as enclosures for baby beardies. This is because baby bearded dragons do best is opaque or non-see though containers, since they don't understand glass, any see through containers will make them feel vulnerable and stressed.

Each container will need a UV light, a heat lamp, a basking area, and something for the bearded dragons to climb on. Some owners will not use any substrate (as the Rubbermaid flooring is easy to clean), however other owners recommend substrate so the bearded dragon's claws don't get too sharp.

Separating the Bearded Dragons
You should separate the baby bearded dragons by size. Do not place large babies with the smaller babies as this can be stressful for the smaller bearded dragons.

Feeding Baby Bearded Dragons
Baby bearded dragons require an enormous amount of food. They will eat live insects (similar to adults), however the insects baby bearded dragons eat must be very small. The crickets must be ¼ inch or smaller in size and need to be fed 3-6 times per day. Besides crickets, baby bearded dragons can also eat smaller roaches and worms (just make sure the insects are no wider than the space between the dragon's eyes).
It is recommended to feed the hatchlings separately in another Rubbermaid container so you can monitor and ensure that each hatchling is eating the correct amount of food.

Even though baby bearded dragons may not eat greens, it is still important that you provide fresh greens in the tank daily. Many breeders claim this makes it much easier to feed the bearded dragons greens later on. When feeding greens, you should make sure they are finely chopped so the baby beardies don't have any trouble eating or digesting them.

**Watering**

Dehydration is a major concern for hatchlings. Do not use water dishes as hatchlings can drown very easily (even in tiny water dishes). Instead you will need to mist them several times a day, use eye droppers, or give them very careful baths.

**Supplements**

Hatchlings will need supplements to help them develop. It is recommended to feed them calcium dusted insects once per day and a multivitamin dusting 5 times per week.

**Baby Bearded Dragon Aggression**

It is not uncommon for baby bearded dragons to become aggressive with each other (which is why it's best to keep as few as possible in the same tank). Many times baby bearded dragons will nip at the toes and tail tips of other baby bearded dragons. They do this because they are growing so quickly and have such a strong appetite that they will actually turn cannibalistic if there isn't enough food or if they didn't eat enough. This is why it's extremely important to make sure each bearded dragon is properly fed every day.

You can minimize the risks of hatchling aggression by doing the following:

- Make sure there are no more than 5 bearded dragons per habitat.
- Make sure the bearded dragons are sorted by size (don't have small bearded dragons mixed with larger beardies).
- Make sure each bearded dragon is properly fed and that there are veggies in the tank at all times.

**When to Sell/Move the Bearded Dragons to Separate Tanks**

When the baby bearded dragons are at least 6 inches in length and are at least 6 weeks of age it is time to find a new home for them. Whether this is selling them to a new family or giving them their own habitat within your home, the choice is up to you. But this is the size/age when they need to be separated from other beardies.