



## Inland Bearded Dragon *Pogona vitticeps*

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- Bearded dragons are named for their loose flap of spiny skin and scales on the underside of the neck that can be voluntarily puffed out in defense or territorial display.
- Bearded dragons are common in the arid to semi arid areas of Australia.
- Tan, light sandy brown, reddish, to light grayish lizard with a rather short and broad head and paler light colored spots and soft spines along the back and sides. Prominent spines on the neck and jowels.
- If provided the proper care, bearded dragons can attain longevity of 10-15 years or more.

### **Size**

Ranges from 3 ½ -5 inches as hatchlings, and 16-24” as adults.

### **Housing**

Housing must be sealed and escape proof. Hatchling bearded dragons can be housed in a 15-20 gallon terrarium or enclosure. Adult bearded dragons require a minimum of a 30-40 gallon long terrarium or enclosure. Hatchling and adult bearded dragons will thrive on a substrate of newspaper, play sand, reptile carpet, or paper towel. Avoid using reptile bark bedding or substrates that result in high humidity. For water, mist hatchlings and juveniles at least twice per day and adults at least 2-3 times weekly as well as their food. Bearded dragons are arid species, and derive the majority of their moisture this way. Provide artificial foliage, driftwood, rocks, or logs for ample basking and hiding opportunities.

For basking, create a thermal gradient (or a warm side) in the cage/enclosure with an appropriate sized under tank heating pad, ceramic, or radiant heat emitter. Ideal temperatures for bearded dragons range from 80-85 degrees F on the cool side and around 100 degrees F on the warm, basking side. Bearded dragons require overhead UVB incandescent and fluorescent lighting to thrive.

Spot clean the enclosure for urates, feces, or uneaten food at least twice per week. Be sure to periodically replace the substrate, clean, and disinfect the enclosure and its furnishings at minimum every 2-3 months.

### **Feeding/Diet**

In the wild, bearded dragons are omnivorous, meaning they will eat both plant and animal matter. They will eat a variety of insects and other invertebrates, as well as fruit and vegetable matter.

Feed bearded dragons in captivity a mixed assortment of chopped up vegetables daily (including carrots, peas, collard and dandelion greens, and beans). Feed green leaf lettuce sparingly if at all. Bearded dragons will also accept crickets, mealworms, roaches, superworms, and waxworms. Gut load these prey items by feeding them commercially available diets for added nutritional value. Bearded dragons may eat pinky mice as well, but feed them these sparingly, if at all. Feed Bearded dragons these insects in a bowl or dish every other day. Provide calcium and vitamin D3 supplements in Bearded dragon diets whenever possible.

### **Handling**

As with many reptiles, hatchling and juvenile bearded dragons typically tend to be initially more nervous and defensive. Handle your bearded dragon gently and deliberately, but do not drop or injure the animal. Most adult bearded dragons will settle down considerably and become quite docile and personable pets to keep.

**\*\*Also be sure to practice basic cleanliness and hygiene associated with proper husbandry after touching or handling any animals or animal enclosures to prevent the possibility of contracting salmonellosis or any other zoonotic pathogens\*\***