



Monticello Animal Hospital

Crista Wallis, DVM

22026 W. 66th St.
Shawnee, KS 66226

Office: 913-422-0301
Fax: 913-422-0302

info@monticello-animal-hospital.com

BEARDED DRAGONS

General Information:

The Australia native bearded dragon is becoming the most popular lizard in captivity due to their ease of maintenance, placid disposition, friendly personality, hardiness, and fierce appearance. Average body length is 18-22 in weighing 283-510 g. The life span of a bearded dragon is 3-10 years. "Bearded" refers to the flap of skin under the chin that is extended when disturbed. They are the most suitable lizard for children because they rarely bite, scratch or whip with their tails. Bearded dragons respond to gentle handling, eat from your hand, and will rest in your lap. A dragon's body should be fully supported when it is being held or carried.

Diet:

Both live prey and salads should be offered to provide a balanced diet for a dragon. They are active during the day so should be fed in the mornings. Live prey may consist of crickets, superworms, mealworms, wax worms, locusts, and pinkie mice. Prey should be "dusted" with a vitamin-mineral supplement and calcium. Prey should be dusted daily for babies with the frequency of dusting being diminished until adulthood to about once every 7-10 days. Salads may consist of romaine, dandelion, turnip greens, mustard greens, beet greens, kale, collards, bok choy, Swiss chard, escarole, spinach, and cilantro. Vegetables can make up to 20% of a diet and include squash, zucchini, sweet potato, broccoli, peas, beans, okra, and grated carrot. 2-5% of the diet may consist of fruits which include papaya, melon, and banana. Bearded dragons should be fed daily. Drinking water should be provided in a shallow bowl. Dragons will soak and defecate in their water so should be changed frequently.

Housing:

Adults need large enclosures of 4x2 ft for room to climb, explore, and bask. Habitats should contain thick climbing branches, a large shallow water tray, a hiding area, and acceptable substrates such as newspaper, alfalfa pellets, cypress mulch, or organic cellulose fiber. Ensure a gradient of temperatures in their enclosure from 70 degrees F to a hot basking spot of around 95 degrees F. The enclosure needs to have appropriate level of humidity to allow proper shedding. It's also important for bearded dragons to have exposure to unfiltered sunlight or commercial full-spectrum fluorescent bulbs. Habitats should be thoroughly cleaned at least once a week with a 3% bleach solution. Dragons housed together should be of similar size with plenty of space.

Health:

A newly purchased bearded dragon should be taken to a veterinarian for a wellness exam and fecal check for parasites. A healthy dragon will be active and alert, have clear eyes, full tail, doesn't hide for a long time, healthy skin, firm stool, and eats regularly. They should be seen by a veterinarian for weight loss, decreased appetite, mucus in mouth or nose, swelling, lethargy, bumps, sores, or abrasions on skin, labored breathing, paralysis of limbs or tail, and abnormal feces.