

Hatchling Caresheet

Monday, 12 June 2006

Last Updated Friday, 18 January 2008

Everything you need to take care of your Baby Dragon

www.AlphaDragonZ.com BEARDED DRAGON CARE SHEET Caring for a bearded dragon Bearded dragons are fun, inquisitive and often exhibit dog like behavior. These are just a few reasons why bearded dragons have become one of the most popular pets in the pet trade today. If you are considering purchasing one of these enjoyable creatures, you should do your research. While being very friendly and tame, they can be a handful when it comes to maintenance. We would suggest visiting many of the forums listed in this care sheet and purchasing one of the books listed at the bottom of this page. If you do decide to purchase a bearded dragon, you will enjoy many years of happiness with your new found friend. Housing Having the right size enclosure for your bearded dragon is very important. The tank or enclosure should be big enough so that your dragon can grow and not be stressed. A hatchling dragon can be housed in a 20 gallon tank for a short period of time depending on its growth rate. The minimum size enclosure for one subadult or adult bearded dragon is 48L X 24D X 18H, and for two dragons it is a minimum of 48L X 30D X 18H. Furniture should be kept to a minimum until about 6 months of age. For hatchlings, the cage should be setup simply. A basking platform that holds heat like a dark river rock or brick should be provided. There should be a basking platform that crickets cannot get under for optimal growth. Crickets can hide and wait until nighttime to make a meal of your hatchling bearded dragon. Heating and Lighting Never guess at your dragon's temperatures. To provide enough heat for your bearded dragon, the basking spot should be between 105-115 F and the cool side of the tank should remain between 80-85 F. A gradient is absolutely critical in maintaining the health of your dragon. The wattage required to provide these temperatures depends on the enclosure size and proximity of furniture to the bulb. Bearded dragons need to be within 8-10 inches of the source of Ultra Violet light (UV). UV-A and UV-B helps to synthesize vitamin D-3 which is necessary for the proper absorption of Calcium. Bulbs that provide UV-A and UV-B include mercury vapor bulbs (Megaray bulbs, Powersun) and strip lights like (Reptisun 5.0, 10.0). Halogen or Flood bulbs can be used with good results over your dragons basking spot. Please do not purchase expensive reptile marketed basking bulbs; they are worthless and overpriced. A Halogen or Flood bulb used in conjunction with an overhead Reptisun 10.0 is what we currently use in most of our enclosures. We cannot stress how important it is to provide a proven source of UVB. There are several ways to monitor temperature. You can buy a tempgun at www.temptgun.com or www.proexotics.com. We personally feel like this is the easiest way to monitor your temperatures if you have several enclosures. For a little less money, you can buy an indoor/outdoor digital thermometer from Home Depot or any Hardware store. Do not use the sticker or stick on Zoo Med thermometer; they are just not accurate enough. Hatchlings can safely drop down into the mid sixties at night. Hatchling dragons need to be kept on a schedule of 14 hours of light and 10 hours of dark. All lights should be placed on a timer that you can purchase for 5-7 dollars at Home Depot or your local hardware store. Keeping your dragon on a regular schedule allows for it to maintain its Circadian rhythm and thus live a much healthier, happy life. Never use a hot rock or any other marketed heat rocks in your bearded dragon's enclosure. Hot rocks are dangerous and can burn your hatchling or adult dragon.

Substrate We here at AlphaDragonZ® recommend paper towels, Duck Brand Shelf liner, or unprinted newspapers for raising hatchling dragons. We personally use Duck Brand Shelf liner that we purchase at Wal-Mart for \$5.00 a roll (72" X 20"). There are several different styles and we only use the light or white colored shelf liner so that the shelf liner does not pull light from the overall enclosure. Your dragons will look the best on a light shelf liner. Avoid Calcsand, Reptisand, Corkbark, Rabbit pellets, and Reptibark; these are all substrates that are extremely dangerous to dragons and have already caused deaths in many dragons. Sand should not be used to raise hatchlings because of the risk of impaction which can lead to serious complications or death of young dragons. Washed and Sifted Play sand can be used for dragons that are 12 inches or more, although there is still a risk of impaction. If you decide to use a particle substrate, the only acceptable one is Washed and Sifted Play sand. Other substrate alternatives include paper towels, newspaper or shelf liner for older bearded dragons. Here at AlphaDragonZ®, we use Duck Brand Shelf liner. We have found that we can easily remove and sanitize any fecal material most effectively on this substrate. The problem with most captive animals is the problem of constantly coming in contact with natural and opportunistic organisms, therefore developing Super infections. Not maintaining proper sanitary conditions will quickly lead to a lethargic, parasite infested dragon. At AlphaDragonZ® we have a system: You will need paper towels, Chlorox or Lysol Bleach wipes, Nolvasan, or water in a spray bottle. Use a paper towel to remove as much fecal material as possible Then spray down area with Nolvasan, or water Again use a paper towel to remove any residual fecal material Then wipe soiled area well with a Chlorox or Lysol wipe After 30-60 seconds spray with water and wipe up with a paper towel We have found this method to be the most effective form of sanitization for our dragons to date. Feeding Bearded dragons require a well balanced diet in order to be healthy and happy. Greens and vegetables should be provided for your dragon in the morning and throughout the afternoon. Greens, vegetables, and Fruits require a longer time to digest, and therefore, should not be offered in the evening hours. The greens should be cut into hatchling bite size pieces to aid in consumption and digestion. Remove all hard veins and anything deemed non edible. Never feed iceberg lettuce because it has very little nutritional value and you will have a mess to clean up when it comes out. Make sure that the feeding dish is shallow enough that the hatchling can see the greens from their basking spot. We use Petri dishes. Some acceptable greens and vegetables are listed below:

| Food Item | Ca | P | Protein | Fat | Fiber | Sugar | Water | Notes |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------|---------|-----|-------|-------|-------|---|
| Alfalfa (plant, not sprouts) | Great staple | | | | | | | |
| Cactus Pad/Leaf (raw) | 2.3:1.8% | 5%unk | unk | | | | | Great staple |
| veggie Collard Greens | 14.5:12.5% | 4%3.6% | 91% | | | | | Great staple, high calcium |
| Dandelion Greens | 2.8:12.7% | 7%3.5% | 2.4%86% | | | | | High calcium, high vit. A (140 IU/g), moderate oxalates, be cautious of pesticides in wild greens |
| Endive | 1.9:11.3% | 2%3.1% | 1.2%94% | | | | | Mod. oxalates, high calcium |
| Escarole | High calcium, mix with other greens | | | | | | | |
| Mustard Greens | 2.4:12.7% | 2%3.3% | 8%91% | | | | | High vit. C (7%), high vit. |

A (53 IU/g), moderate oxalates (1287 ppm), goitrogensSilkworm1:2.463.8%unkunk 76%Contain an enzyme called serrapeptase, this has properties that make calcium absorption more efficient, can reduce inflammation, pain and best of all it can break down arterial plaque.Squash, Acorn1:1.8%.9%1.5%2.2%88% Squash, Butternut (Winter)1.5:11.0%.1%11.7%2.2%86%High fiber, high vit. A (78 IU/g)Squash, Hubbard1:1.52.0%.5%8.7%2.2%88%High fiber, high vit. A (54 IU/g)Squash, Scallop1:21.2%.2%3.8%2.2%94% Squash, Spaghetti2:1.6%.6%6.9%2.2%92%High calcium and fiberSquash, Summer1:1.81.2%.2%1.9%2.2%94% Turnip Greens4.5:11.5%.3%3.2%1%91%High vit. C (6%), high vit. A (76 IU/g), mod. oxalates Information provided by Veronica at www.Beautifuldragons.com .

In California you can find Cut N Clean Greens at Ralphs or Albertsons. We use the Country Mix which contains pre-cut and washed Collard, Turnip, and Mustard greens. This stuff is great. Although it is pre-washed, we still give it a thorough rinse with filtered cold water.

All prey items should be gut loaded with www.cricketfood.com cricket gut load, fish flakes, oatmeal and/or baby cereal. Crickets should always be well hydrated with vegetables, fruits and/or cricket water bites. Remember, half of the nutrients your bearded dragon receives are from the last meal the cricket consumed. Crickets* and Reptical Pellets should be the primary source of nutrition for hatchlings. It is not uncommon for our hatchlings to eat upwards of seventy crickets in a day. Most of our dragons eat greens at a very young age, so they most likely will be eating greens when you receive them. It is extremely important to keep a proper schedule for your young hatchling. They have hearty appetites and should be fed as much as they can eat in a 10 minute period three to four times a day. As a bearded dragon ages, their vegetable consumption will increase at the same time as their cricket consumption will decrease. Other live insects that can be included in your bearded dragon's diet are super worms, meal worms, wax worms, silkworms and roaches.

Worms should be considered only as treats for your bearded dragon due to their high fat content. If your bearded dragon consumes a large amount of these treats, it may lead to fatty liver disease. The only worm that can be used as a staple for bearded dragon's diets are silkworms. *****Please make sure that the size of food offered to your dragon is not too large for them. The general rule is to feed bearded dragons crickets no larger than the distance between their eyes. This is very important because feeding hatchlings insects that are too large can result in impaction, paralysis and/or choking that can result in death. WaterHatchlings need to be sprayed with water about three times a day. It is best to spray dragons directly on their head first and their body second. Most dragons will begin to lap up the water. Also, all dragons need to be given a bath at least once a week. Hatchlings should be given a bath as often as possible. The bath water should reach their shoulders but not go over their head. Do not leave your dragons alone in the bath; young dragons can drown very easily. We also recommend spraying their greens with water. You can provide a water bowl for your dragon, but it is not essential. Make sure the water bowl is small enough that your dragon can climb in and out with ease. With bathing, spraying, and water consumed from their greens, bearded dragons will obtain enough water to prevent dehydration. If you notice that your dragon has excessive wrinkling, you can put pedialyte or water into a syringe and place a drop on your hatchling's nose. The hatchling will lap it up and receive much needed hydration by this method. Let the dragon dictate the pace at which it drinks. Supplementation

Supplementation with calcium, vitamins and minerals is necessary in maintaining a healthy dragon and for the proper development of strong bones. Crickets should be dusted with calcium once a day until your dragon begins to slow down its growth. You can dust your crickets by putting the crickets you want to feed in a bag and then sprinkling calcium over them until they are well coated. For this, we recommend Rep-Cal Calcium with Vitamin D3. It is also necessary to dust with vitamins/minerals one to two times a week. These vitamins are also essential in keeping your dragon in proper health. We use Sticky Tongue Farms Miner-All Indoor. Handling When bringing a new bearded dragon into your home, it is important to give them enough time to get adjusted to their environment. We don't recommend handling your bearded dragon until they are comfortable with you and with their surroundings. This usually takes 2-3 weeks and can take even longer. Hatchlings should generally not be excessively handled. Once your bearded dragon is comfortable, they do enjoy lying in your lap or on your shoulder. When you hold them, keep them in a position so that their body is supported by the palm of your hand. Recommended Books For complete and detailed information regarding bearded dragon care, we recommend The Bearded Dragon Manual written by Vosjoli, Mailloux, Donoghue, Klingenberg, and Cole. Another good reference is Bearded Dragons, one of the Reptile Keeper's Guides, written by Bartlett and Bartlett. Recommended Bearded Dragon ForumsIt is always a good idea to gather knowledge from several different sources, so here are some places where you will be able to receive up to date advice on husbandry and health issues. I recommend joining a few or all of these groups as soon as possible:

<http://home.comcast.net/~holachapulin/home.html><http://groups.yahoo.com/group/pogona/www.Kingsnake.com>
www.Faunaclassifieds.comwww.ReptileForums.comWe here at AlphaDragonZ™ would like to thank you for being a part of our love of these beautiful creatures. If you have any questions or concerns, you can contact us through www.AlphaDragonZ.com. Enjoy your bearded dragon!!!! *Other acceptable feeders All content, including images and text, on this site is property of www.AlphaDragonZ.com unless otherwise noted; and may not be used without expressed written permission. © 2004 www.AlphaDragonZ.com