



# DarkSide Dragons

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## Bearded Dragon (Pogona Vitticeps) Care Sheet

Our dragons are pets first and are handled as such. Sometimes our pets give us wonderful babies that we also treat as our pets until the day they leave for their new homes. Our animals are not simply “breeders” – they are our friends. That is why our dragons and their babies have such wonderful temperaments and personalities. Please take the time to review this information carefully; following our instructions will ensure you raise a happy and healthy pet.

### The New Home

- Your juvenile is a lot smaller than a full grown adult and will not feel comfortable in an adult-sized terrarium. We recommend a 20-30 gallon terrarium as a good starter size, or better yet, simply section off a larger terrarium so that as your dragon grows, you can easily adjust the size of its living quarters. We recommend an adult terrarium size of no smaller than 36”long x 18” wide x 18”high. **\*Please remember that dragons of different sizes cannot be housed together\***
- Substrate: DarkSide Dragons uses newsprint and papertowel for our adults and hatchlings. We find sand is messy, and difficult to keep clean. Sand is fine to use, it is just not our choice. If any member of your family has asthma or allergies, sand may not be the best choice for you. If sand is your choice be sure to use children’s play sand, it is the safest and most economical sand. Do not use Calci-Sand or any other commercially prepared reptile sand containing calcium. The risk of impaction is too great. Newspaper is a good choice, as is ceramic or vinyl tile. Please watch your temperatures carefully if you use ceramic tiles.
- Furniture should be sparse at best for babies. A large rock to bask on and maybe a stick to climb on is sufficient for a juvenile dragon. Add a food and water dish and you are set. If you choose to give your dragon a water dish please make sure it is very shallow. When your dragon approaches adulthood, a larger water dish will be ok, along with more extravagant furnishings. **Please do not use electric heat rocks.** These are dangerous for your beardie.
- Hides: it is our experience that dragons do not need hides. If you wish you may provide a hide for your dragon, we choose not to.
- Lighting: Lights are very important. You will **need two types of lighting** to keep your dragon happy and healthy. Firstly, your dragon *loves* basking under a nice warm heat emitting light. We recommend a 75-150 watt tight beam basking light. Select the wattage of the light depending on the size of your enclosure. A smaller enclosure will need a smaller wattage; a larger enclosure will need a larger wattage. Trial and error works best here in order to find the best wattage to create the optimal temperature inside the enclosure. Secondly, a **UVB-emitting bulb is essential for the health of your dragon.** UVB light is essential for Vitamin D production which in turn is essential to calcium absorption. Please choose a UVB light with a “Desert” rating, or highest level of UVB. Follow the manufactures directions for the distance to place the bulb from the dragon, and also follow the recommended schedule to replace the bulbs. UVB production decreases over time, and it is good practice to replace the UVB lights at least every 6 months.
- A second lighting option are Mercury Vapour Heat/Lights. These are excellent quality lights that produce both heat and the UVB light your beardie needs to thrive. Being a “2 in 1” light, this option is cost

effective. You only need one bulb and one fixture (depending of course on the size of your enclosure). DarkSide Dragons regularly uses these type bulbs. If you do decide to use these bulbs please follow the instructions on the box and ensure temps are steady **BEFORE** you put your dragon in it's enclosure.

- Temperatures in the basking area should be maintained at 105-110 degrees F. Make sure the basking rock is directly under the basking lights, and the temperature of the rock's surface is within the appropriate range. **You will need a digital thermometer with probe.** Alternatively you can use a temp gun to take accurate readings. We recommend you set up the basking area at one end of the terrarium so that the other end remains cool, about 80 degrees F. Put the food and water dishes more towards the cooler end. At night when **the lights are all off** the temperature can drop safely to room temperature, but certainly no lower than 60 degrees.
- Bearded dragons are diurnal, meaning they are awake and active during daylight hours and sleep at night. 10-12 hours of "daylight" per day is ideal. Lights must be off the rest of the time. A timer is handy to provide this ideal mix. **\*Dragons do not need any kind of light at night. Don't waste your money on "night bulbs". In fact, night lights cause beardies stress, even the black or red ones. They need darkness to properly rest.\***

### Menu

- Bearded dragons are omnivores - eating both vegetable matter and animal protein. Your new dragon is eating salad daily along with crickets. It is important to offer both vegetables and crickets daily while your dragon is growing. If your dragon is reluctant to eat his salad, try offering salad first thing in the morning before its first cricket meal. A hungry dragon will usually eat his salad then.
- We have found that dragons remain interested in their salads as long as we vary the contents on a weekly basis. **Our salad staples are: mixed spring greens, mustard greens, bok choy, excarole, curly endive, collard greens, dandelion greens and romaine lettuce (sparingly).** Do not feed anything from the spinach family (spinach, any kind of chard). Chop or tear salad into bite size pieces. We provide our dragons (adults, juveniles and babies) with salad daily. Even hatchlings are offered salad.
- Fruits & Veggies: We also add some shredded carrot, thawed frozen mixed vegetables, kernel corn, squash and zucchini from time to time. Offer fruit as a treat now and then. Too much fruit will cause digestive upset.
- Crickets: Your baby dragon is feeding on crickets, as much as she will eat twice a day. Older juveniles are down to one cricket meal per day. Remove any uneaten crickets after the feeding. Leftover crickets will pester your dragon when the lights go out. Be prepared for your growing juvenile to eat around 15-20 appropriately-sized crickets per day. Dust crickets with calcium supplement (Zoo Med Calcium with Vit D) once a day (shake & bake style) and dust with a multivitamin (Reptivite) once a week. Right now your dragon is eating ½ inch sized crickets. Cricket size should grow along with your dragon. A good rule of thumb to follow is to feed crickets that are no bigger than the width of your dragon's mouth. Bear in mind that Bearded Dragons will attempt to eat any prey that moves, no matter how big, so please do not feed crickets/worms that are too large. Swallowing too-large prey can cause serious harm, even death. We recommend you keep feeding your juvenile dragon crickets twice a day until he is about 10-12 inches long. Then once a day is good until about adult size (16-18 inches). Once adult size is reached, continue to feed salad daily and the protein source (crickets or worms) every other day. At each feeding, feed your dragon until he is full, and keep 2-3 crickets in the enclosure. That many crickets left in the enclosure shouldn't cause any problems as long as there is some leftover salad in the enclosure for them to eat. Please do not attempt to feed your dragon anything caught in your backyard.
- Worms: Phoenix worms are a great addition to your dragon's diet, along with other soft-bodied worms such as silkworms, hornworms, butterworms, or waxworms. Do not feed mealworms or superworms to your dragon until he is at least 12 inches long. We vary our dragons protein sources so that along with crickets as a staple, we also offer appropriately sized worms occasionally. Our adults have superworms and crickets as staples, with the occasional soft-bodied worm. Waxworms are very high in calories and should only be fed occasionally.

- Please note that your new dragon may not eat for a few days while he becomes accustomed to his new home. Please be patient and continue to offer meals, while ensuring he stays hydrated by misting him with water. Once he starts eating again look out!

### Health

- Be prepared for your juvenile to shed – a lot! Bearded dragons must shed their skin as they grow. The faster she grows the more often she will shed. You will know your dragon is getting ready to shed because their skin will take on a milky greyish tone, this is the old skin starting to separate from the newer skin underneath. Soon the old skin will start to peel off. Do not try to peel it off for your dragon, as you may harm the tender new skin underneath. A warm bath is a good idea during the shed cycle. After the shed, check to make sure none was retained, particularly around the feet and tail. Some dragons act a little under the weather during a shed. Do not be alarmed, it will pass. If your dragon is still acting off after the shed, time for the vet.
- Some dragons really enjoy bath time. We recommend you mist your dragon once a day. The dragon will lick water from its nose. Most of our dragons have also learned to drink from a shallow water dish as well, and all of our dragons sold have had a couple baths by the time they go to their new homes. We recommend bathing your dragon once every week-10 days. The water should be warm, but not hot and at a shoulder depth on your dragon.
- Parasites: Dragons can get external as well as internal parasites. If you see any parasites on your dragon we recommend you purchase an appropriate remedy for reptiles and follow directions carefully. If you suspect internal parasites see your vet with a fresh stool sample immediately.
- Brumation: Adult dragons over 1 year old will usually have a period of “downtime” most likely during the fall or winter of their second year. In reptile terms this period of inactivity is known as “brumation”. As the daylight hours become shorter, you may notice your dragon wanting to sleep a lot during the day and not eating as much. Do not be alarmed if your dragon sleeps most of the day and eats very little. This period of semi-hibernation may last a couple of days to a few weeks, or even a month or more. Every dragon is different. As long as there are no visible signs of weight loss your dragon is most likely in brumation.

### Housekeeping

- Remove feces immediately, or daily in the very least. Give your terrarium a thorough cleaning when necessary, usually every other week or so using hot soapy water. Make sure you rinse well. Do not use any cleaners other than vinegar or mild dishsoap. To disinfect, use a mild solution of bleach and water and soak for 15-20 mins. Instead of glass cleaner, use a vinegar/water solution. Give your clean terrarium a smell. If there is any lingering bleach odour keep rinsing well until you can no longer smell it.

# DarkSide Dragons

## Dragon Information Sheet



Date of Purchase: \_\_\_\_\_

Purchase Price: \_\_\_\_\_

Dragon Genotype: \_\_\_\_\_

Dragon Phenotype: \_\_\_\_\_

Probable Sex:     M             F             U

Hatch Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Length: \_\_\_\_\_

Breeder Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Health Guarantee:**

DarkSide Dragons price structure is based on colour, genetics and size. All baby and juvenile dragons sold come with a Bearded Dragon Care Sheet. And a 21-day Health Guarantee. Your dragon was sold in perfect health. If for some reason its health deteriorates, a replacement will be offered, In order to qualify for this guarantee: 1. Your dragon must be a minimum of 6 weeks old or 6 inches long at time of purchase; 2. The purchaser must contact DarkSide Dragons with any concerns regarding the health of the dragon; and 3. If your dragon dies, return the expired pet to DarkSide Dragons. Returns for any other reason other than health are not permitted. This sheet must accompany all Health Guarantee Returns. All sales are final. Sales of adult dragons are not guaranteed.