

# Pet Care of a Bearded Dragon



Bearded dragons are from the lizard species. They are often referred to as “beardies” and are one of the most popular lizards in captivity in the UK. Their name comes from the spikey folds of skin around their neck, which inflate and turn black when they are excited or defending themselves.

They originate from the dry scrublands and woodlands of Australia, therefore in captivity they need their environment to replicate their natural surroundings in the wild.

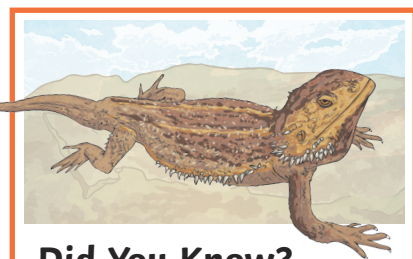
## Environment

Bearded dragons must be kept in a vivarium. This is a large, secure, glass enclosure. A recommended size to accommodate one lizard is a vivarium which is 120cm long and 60cm high. Beardies can grow up to 45cm long and need room to move around and stretch out.

As bearded dragons are ectothermic and use the environment to regulate their body temperature, they need a warm end of the vivarium and a cool end. There must also be a basking zone, which is the warmest part of the enclosure. They like to lie, or bask, on a natural stone near the heat lamp provided. A thermostat must be installed to ensure the temperature doesn't fluctuate. It must not drop below 22°C at night.

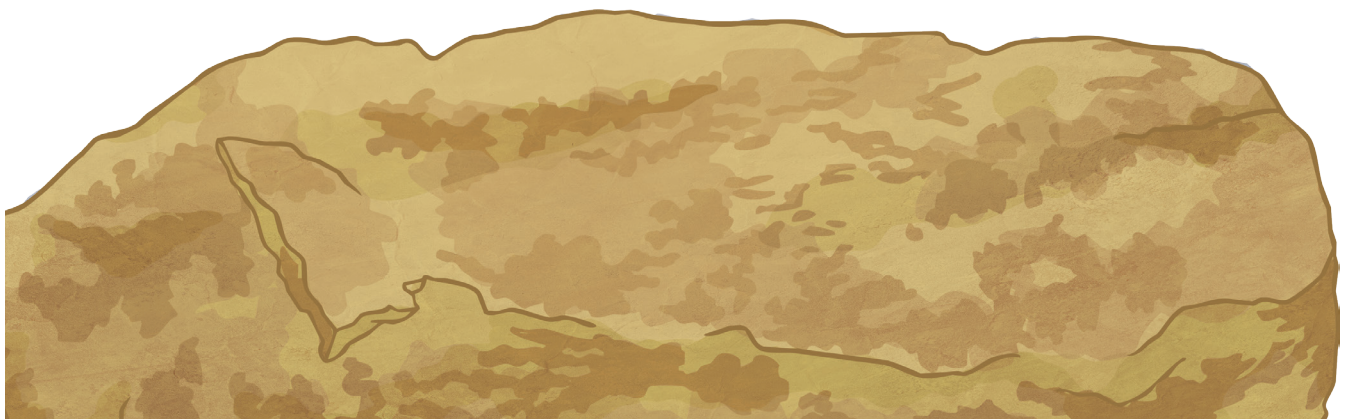
## Substrate

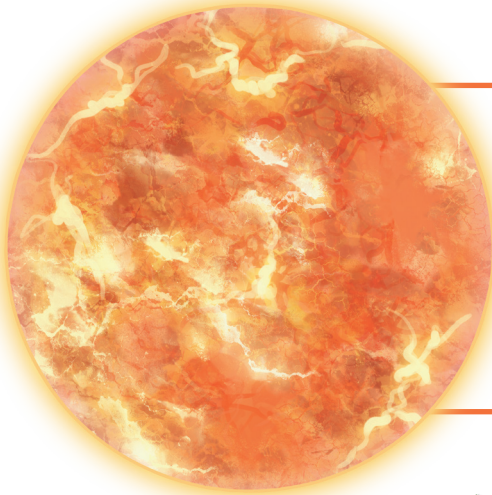
The base of the vivarium needs to be covered with a sand and soil mixture, due to the bearded dragon's natural instinct to dig. Stone tiles should have ridges to help the reptile grip.



### Did You Know?

Bearded dragons are diurnal which means they are active during the day.





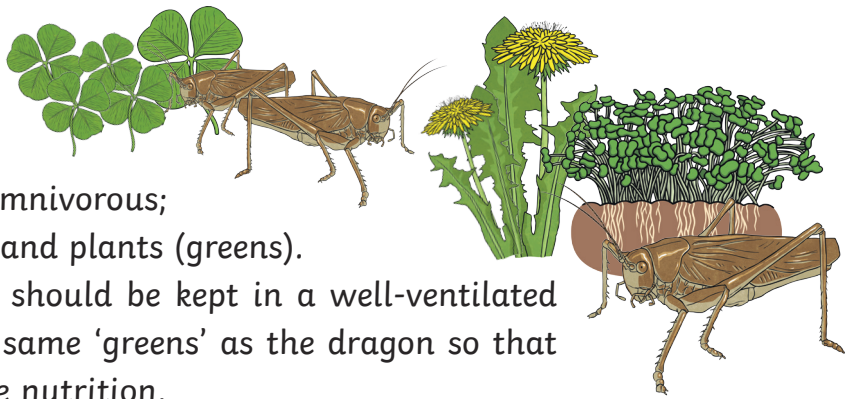
## Light

Lizards use the ultraviolet light from the sun to make vitamin D in their skin. This is essential for the storage and use of calcium in their bodies. A special UV light must be installed in their vivarium.

## Diet

Bearded dragons are omnivorous; they eat live invertebrates and plants (greens).

They like live food, which should be kept in a well-ventilated container and fed the the same 'greens' as the dragon so that the lizard benefits from the nutrition.



Safe Greens	Live Food
watercress	
rocket	
chard	
grated butternut squash	crickets
dandelions	locusts
clover	calciworms
plantain leaves	

These lizards must not have spinach, as it affects the dragon's ability to absorb calcium into their bodies.

## Feeding Tips

- Remove any uneaten live foods as they can bite the lizard;
- Cover the live food with supplement powder to ensure the lizards get all of the nutrients they need.

### Two's Company

Bearded dragons are fiercely territorial. Males live a solitary life and in the wild, chase other males from their space. Females can fight if they are in groups - they have been known to bite off the toes of other lizards and sometimes kill! Captive bearded dragons should be singular.

### Signs of a healthy lizard:

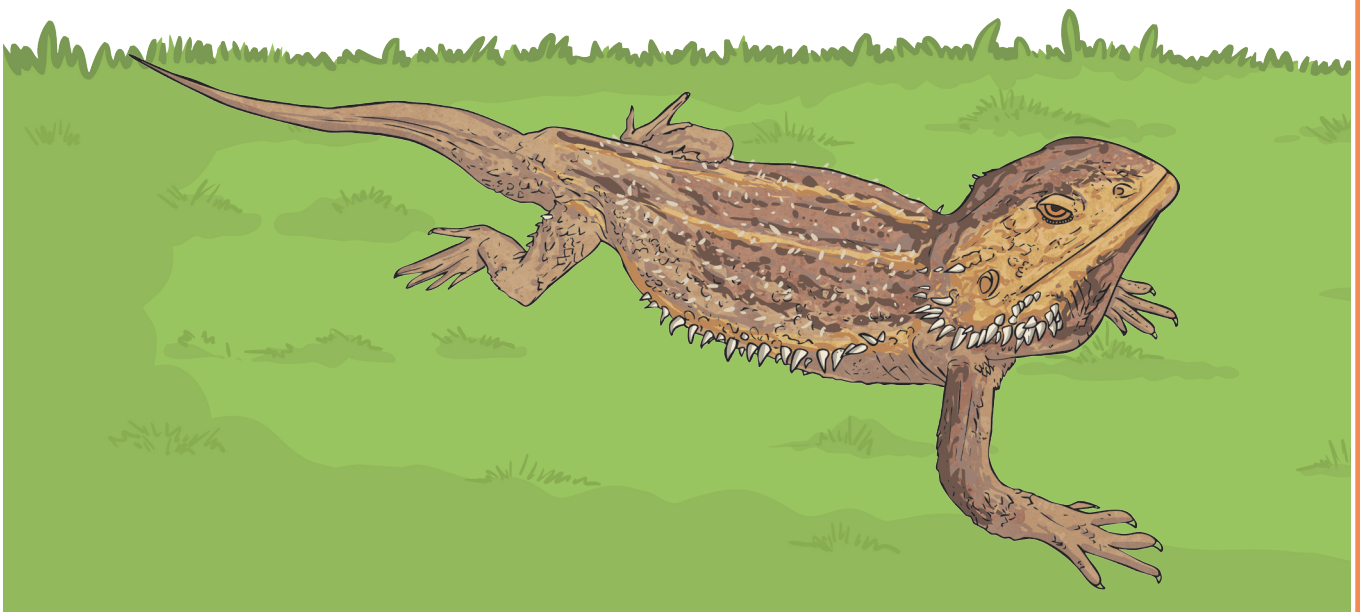
- clear, bright eyes;
- thick base to their tail;
- hips will not be sticking out;
- bright colour after basking.

### Signs of calcium deficiency:

- muscle twitching;
- swollen legs;
- fragile bones;
- deformed limbs, spine, jaw.

### Sunbathing Lizard

A bearded dragon can be taken outside on sunny, warm days to feel the benefit of natural UV light. Shade must be available and the reptile must be constantly supervised.



# Questions

1. Explain how bearded dragons came to be known by this name.

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2. Why do you think their captive environment needs to replicate their natural environment?

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3. Explain why the vivarium needs to be secure and large.

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4. A thermostat must be installed to 'ensure the temperature doesn't fluctuate'. What does this mean?

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5. A new owner of a bearded dragon is planning to put newspaper in the bottom of the vivarium. Explain what you think of this idea, and what other suggestions would you make?

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6. Why do you think the live food that will be fed to the dragon needs to be fed and looked after?

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7. What is the purpose of putting a powder supplement on the live food before giving it to the dragon?

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8. Your friend is going to get a much larger vivarium and put three bearded dragons in there.

What would you tell them?

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9. A bearded dragon has a swollen leg and one of its muscles is twitching. What could be wrong with it, what could have caused it and what might help, until you can get it to a reptile expert?

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10. Write a definition for each of these words:

Diurnal: \_\_\_\_\_

Omnivore: \_\_\_\_\_

Ectothermic: \_\_\_\_\_

# Answers

1. Explain how bearded dragons came to be known by this name.  
**Bearded dragons came by their name because they have spikey folds of skin around their neck which inflate and turn black when they get excited or look to protect themselves.**
2. Why do you think their captive environment needs to replicate their natural environment?  
**Answers will vary. Possible points: they need to be healthy/ they are animals and need to be comfortable where they live/ their bodies are reliant on having particular conditions (ectothermic).**
3. Explain why the vivarium needs to be secure and large.  
**The vivarium needs to be secure so that the lizard is safe and cannot escape. It needs to be large because bearded dragons grow to 45cm long and need to move around and stretch out.**
4. A thermostat must be installed to 'ensure the temperature doesn't fluctuate'. What does this mean?  
**To 'ensure the temperature doesn't fluctuate' means that the thermostat will make sure that the temperature stays the same and doesn't go up or down.**
5. A new owner of a bearded dragon is planning to put newspaper in the bottom of the vivarium. Explain what you think of this idea, and what other suggestions would you make?  
**I would tell the new owner that I don't think this is a good idea because bearded dragons instinctively like to dig, and they can't dig in newspaper. I would suggest they put a sand and soil mixture down so that the dragon can dig in it, as if it were in their natural environment.**
6. Why do you think the live food that will be fed to the dragon needs to be fed and looked after?  
**I think that the live food needs to be fed and looked after because the dragon eats living food so it needs to be healthy in order to keep the dragon healthy too.**

7. What is the purpose of putting a powder supplement on the live food before giving it to the dragon?

**The purpose of putting a powder supplement on the live food before giving it to the dragon is to make sure it is getting all the nutrients it needs, as it would in the wild.**

8. Your friend is going to get a much larger vivarium and put three bearded dragons in there. What would you tell them?

**I would tell my friend that they should only keep one bearded dragon at a time, because they are territorial. The males chase each other from their space and the females bite off the toes of other lizards and sometimes kill them.**

9. A bearded dragon has a swollen leg and one of its muscles is twitching. What could be wrong with it, what could have caused it and what might help, until you can get it to a reptile expert?

**If the bearded dragon has a swollen leg and one of its muscles is twitching, it could be suffering from a lack of calcium. One problem might be that it needs a UV light in the vivarium in order to make vitamin D in the skin, which helps the storage and use of calcium in the body. Also, it should not be given spinach because this stops calcium being absorbed within the body.**

10. Write a definition for each of these words:

**Diurnal - an animal which is active during the day.**

**Omnivore - an animal which eats animals and plants.**

**Ectothermic - an animal that uses its environment to control its body temperature.**

# Pet Care of a Bearded Dragon



Bearded dragons are lizards. They are also known as “beardies” and are one of the most popular lizards in captivity in the UK. Their name comes from the spikey folds of skin around their neck, which inflate and turn black when they are excited or need to defend themselves.

They originally come from the dry scrublands of Australia. In captivity, they need their environment to be as similar as possible to their natural surroundings in the wild.

## Environment

Bearded dragons must be kept in a large glass enclosure called a vivarium. It needs to be 120cm long and 60cm high, for one dragon. Beardies can grow up to 45cm long and need room to move around and stretch out.

Bearded dragons are ectothermic, therefore they use the environment to control their body temperature. They need a warm end of the vivarium and a cool end so that they can move when they need to change their temperature. They like to lie, or bask, on a natural stone near the heat lamp provided. A thermostat must be installed to make sure the temperature remains constant.

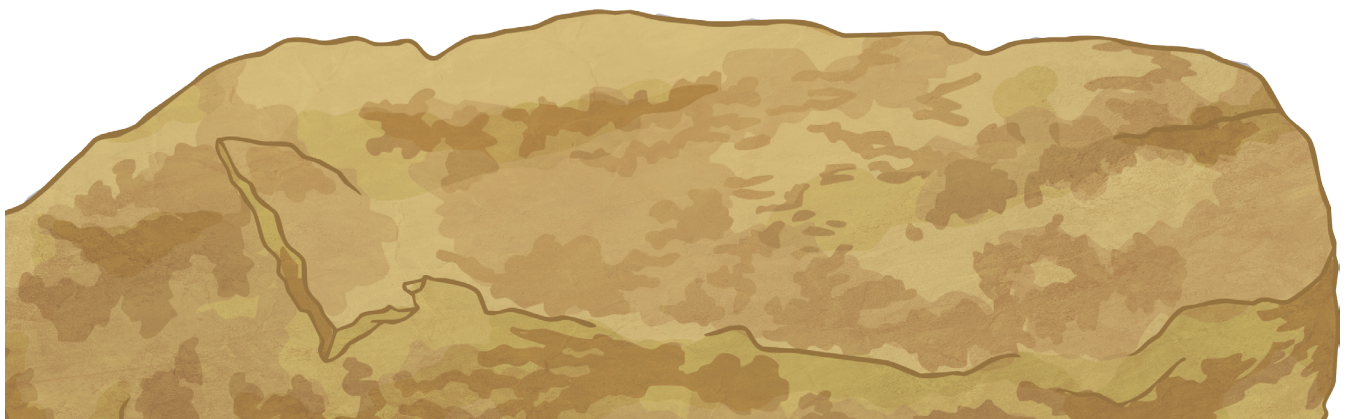
## Substrate

The base of the vivarium needs to be covered with a sand and soil mixture, as bearded dragons have a natural instinct to dig. Stone tiles should have ridges to help the reptile grip.

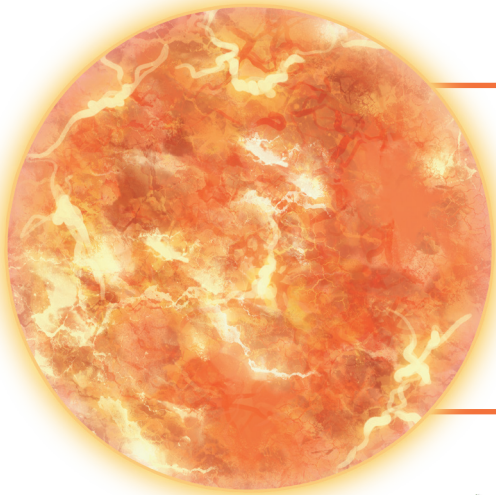


### Did You Know?

Bearded dragons are diurnal which means they are active during the day.







## Light

Lizards use the ultraviolet light from the sun to make vitamin D in their skin. This is vital for their skin to make calcium and store it in their bodies. A special UV light must be installed in their vivarium.

## Diet

Bearded dragons are omnivorous.

This means they eat live invertebrates - called live foods - and plants, known as greens. Keep live food in a well ventilated container and feed them the same greens as the dragon so that the lizard gets the nutrition through eating the invertebrates.



Safe Greens	Live Food
watercress	
rocket	
criss	crickets
grated butternut squash	locusts
dandelions	calciworms
clover	
plantain leaves	

If bearded dragons have spinach, it affects the dragon's ability to absorb calcium into their bodies.

## Feeding Tips

- Take out any uneaten live foods from the vivarium, as they can bite the lizard.
- Cover the live food with supplement powder to ensure the lizards get all of the nutrients they need.

### Two's Company

Bearded dragons are very territorial and will chase other males from their space. Females can fight if they are in groups - they have been known to bite the toes of other lizards and sometimes kill them!

### Signs of a healthy lizard:

- clear, bright eyes;
- thick base to their tail;
- hips will not be sticking out;
- bright colour after basking.

### Signs of calcium deficiency:

- muscle twitching;
- swollen legs;
- fragile bones;
- deformed limbs, spine, jaw.

### Sunbathing Lizard

A bearded dragon can be taken outside into the garden on sunny warm days to get natural UV light from the sun. Shade must be available and they must be constantly watched.



# Questions

1. Why are bearded dragons called this?

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2. Why do bearded dragons need a large vivarium?

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3. How do bearded dragons use the environment to control their temperature?

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4. Why do they need a soil and sand substrate?

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5. What might happen if a UV light isn't fitted to the vivarium?

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6. Explain why the live foods are given the same greens the dragon is given.

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7. Give three examples of plants which can be fed to a bearded dragon.

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8. Why do the uneaten live foods need to be removed from the vivarium?

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9. Describe what the outcome might be if more than one female was kept in the vivarium.

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10. Would you want to own a bearded dragon? Explain your thoughts.

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# Answers

1. Why are bearded dragons called this?  
**Bearded dragons are called this because they have spikey folds of skin around their neck, which inflate and turn black when they are excited or need to defend themselves.**
2. Why do bearded dragons need a large vivarium?  
**Bearded dragons need a large vivarium because they grow to 45cm and like to stretch out and move around.**
3. How do bearded dragons use the environment to control their temperature?  
**Bearded dragons use the environment to control their temperature by moving from a cool place to a warmer place.**
4. Why do they need a soil and sand substrate?  
**They need soil and sand substrate because they have an instinct to dig and these materials are good for them to dig in.**
5. What might happen if a UV light isn't fitted to the vivarium?  
**If a UV light is not fitted to the vivarium, the lizard cannot make vitamin D in its skin which means it cannot store calcium in its body. It can become very ill without calcium.**
6. Explain why the live foods are given the same greens the dragon is given.  
**Live foods are given the same greens as the dragon because then the dragon will get the nutrition of the greens as well as the live food, when they eat it.**
7. Give three examples of plants which can be fed to a bearded dragon.  
**The bearded dragon can be given: watercress, rocket, cress, grated butternut squash, dandelion, clover and plantain leaves. (Accept any three).**
8. Why do the uneaten live foods need to be removed from the vivarium?  
**The uneaten live foods need to be removed from the vivarium because they might bite the bearded dragon.**
9. Describe what the outcome might be if more than one female was kept in the vivarium.  
**If more than one female was kept in the vivarium, they may fight and then they might bite each other's toes off, or even kill one another.**
10. Would you want to own a bearded dragon? Explain your thoughts.  
**Answers will vary.**

# Pet Care of a Bearded Dragon



Bearded dragons are reptiles. Their name comes from the spikey folds of skin around their neck, which inflate and turn black when they are excited or afraid.

They originally come from the dry scrublands of Australia. Their captive environment needs to be similar to their natural environment.



## Did You Know?

- Bearded dragons are diurnal which means they are active during the day.
- They are known as 'beardies'.
- They originally came from the dry scrublands of Australia.

## Environment

Bearded dragons must be kept in a large glass tank called a vivarium. It needs to be 120cm long and 60cm high for one dragon. Beardies can grow up to 45cm long and need room to move around and stretch out.

Bearded dragons need the vivarium to have a warm end and a cool end, so that they can control their body temperature. Putting a thermostat in the vivarium will make sure the temperature does not change.

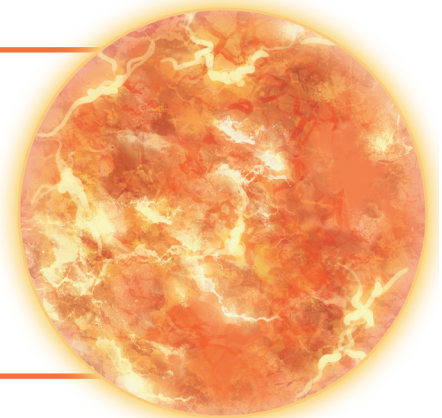
These lizards like to dig, so put a mixture of soil and sand, bought from the reptile shop, on the bottom of the vivarium.

## Two's Company

Bearded dragons should not live together as they fight for living space. The males chase each other and the females bite off a rival's toes!

## Light

A special light which gives off ultraviolet (UV) rays must be in the vivarium. Bearded dragons use UV light to make calcium in their skin. They would normally get this from the sun in the wild.





## Diet

Bearded dragons eat live insects and some plants. They must be fed in the morning so that they can digest their food all day.

Safe Greens	Live Food
watercress rocket cress grated butternut squash dandelions clover plantain leaves	crickets locusts calciworms

### Signs of a healthy lizard:

- clear, bright eyes;
- thick base to their tail;
- hips will not be sticking out.

### Signs of calcium deficiency:

- muscle twitching;
- swollen legs;
- fragile bones;
- deformed limbs, spine, jaw.

### Sunbathing Lizard

Take your bearded dragon out into the garden on sunny, warm days. This helps them to get natural UV light from the sun. Make sure there is some shade and remember to watch them all the time.



# Questions

1. What sort of animal are bearded dragons?

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2. What other name do bearded dragons have?

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3. What do captive bearded dragons need to be kept in?

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4. Why should there be a thermostat in the vivarium?

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5. What does UV stand for?

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6. Should bearded dragons live together? Explain your answer.

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7. When should a bearded dragon be fed?

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8. Give three signs of a healthy bearded dragon.

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9. Why should you take a bearded dragon out into the garden on sunny days?

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# Answers

1. What sort of animal are bearded dragons?  
**Bearded dragons are reptiles.**
2. What other name do bearded dragons have?  
**Another name that bearded dragons have is 'beardies'.**
3. What do captive bearded dragons need to be kept in?  
**Captive dragons need to be kept in a large, glass tank called a vivarium.**
4. Why should there be a thermostat in the vivarium?  
**There should be a thermostat in the vivarium because bearded dragons need to be in a place where the temperature does not change.**
5. What does UV stand for?  
**UV stands for ultraviolet light.**
6. Should bearded dragons live together? Explain your answer.  
**No, bearded dragons should not live together because they fight for living space/the males chase each other/the females bite each other's toes!**
7. When should a bearded dragon be fed?  
**A bearded dragon should be fed in the morning.**
8. Give three signs of a healthy bearded dragon.  
**Three signs of a healthy bearded dragon: (accept any three): clear, bright eyes, thick base to their tail; hips will not be sticking out.**
9. Why should you take a bearded dragon out into the garden on sunny days?  
**You should take a bearded dragon outside on sunny days, to get natural UV light.**