

# Bearded Dragons



Bearded dragons are medium sized lizards. They are mostly found in the wild of Australia's deserts. We brought them to the United States in the 1990s and are now among the most popular pet reptiles.

The bearded dragon's habitat is warm and dry. No snow for these guys! Bearded dragons grow up to 24 inches from tip to tail. They come in many colors like red, yellow, orange, white, and tan. These colors help them blend in where they live.

Bearded dragons, or beardies as they are called, can live up to 14 years old! They live longer if they are in a safe place or with people. Bearded dragons enjoy having people hold and pet them lightly. They are best in homes that have older children. They are calm reptiles that do not need a lot of care.

Bearded dragons are omnivores, which means they eat both plants and animals. They eat a wide variety of insects, vegetables, and fruits. Insects such as crickets, cockroaches, and worms, and veggies such as kale, sweet potatoes and peppers make tasty meals for beardies. Early in life, they like to eat more bugs than plants. When they get older, bearded dragons in captivity eat mostly plants and fewer insects, since they aren't as active anymore.

Bearded dragons may look scary at first, but don't be afraid of these kind reptiles! They are gentle creatures. When they feel afraid, they do not attack. Instead, they freeze, puff up their throat, and sometimes change colors to blend in and hide.

Fun Fact: Beardies are known for lifting a front leg and waving it in circles like they are saying, "Hello!"

## A Good Pet?



What makes an animal a good pet? There are so many things to consider! The way they look, the way they act, and their needs can all help you decide if an animal will be a good addition to your family.

The way an animal looks can help you decide if it will make a good pet. A small animal like an ant will be easy to lose. Large animals like elephants will be too hard to keep in the backyard! That is why most people have dogs, cats, and reptiles as pets. They are just the right size!

The way an animal acts is important when picking a pet. You don't want an animal that is wild or mean. Having an animal that is calm and likes to be held is the best choice. Trying to have a lion or tiger for a pet would be very dangerous! Monkeys look so sweet and are lots of fun to watch, but they are too active to keep in a house.

Caring for an animal is the most important thing. You have to be very responsible when you have a pet. Some animals take so much work! Picking an animal that is easy to take care of is best. A large aquarium filled with beautiful butterfly fish, betta, or angelfish peacefully swimming around is nice to look at, but all that water has to be changed and that big tank has to be cleaned regularly. That's a messy job! You also have to make sure the fish get along before they can live together.

Picking out and owning a pet can be a lot of fun. Just make sure you select the right pet for you and your family!