



FIRE and ICE DRAGONS

Specializing in HIGH COLOR MORPH
BEARDED DRAGONS
and Crested Geckos



Produced by the Management and Staff of Fire and Ice Dragons

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Diseases in Bearded Dragons

Dr. Roger J. Klingenberg, D.V.M.



Fire and Ice Dragons' Adam, Kristen & Stephanie at the September 2002 Mid Atlantic Reptile Show

During his lecture titled "Diseases in Bearded Dragons" on Saturday September 14th at the Mid-Atlantic Reptile Show in Timonium, MD, Roger J. Klingenberg, D.V.M., described the symptoms and treatments of a variety of parasites and illnesses that affect dragons. We thought we'd share some excerpts from his lecture and offer something useful for beginners as well as the more experienced owner:

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Substrates:

Dr. Klingenberg recommended that to avoid most illnesses or to help contain the spread of such during treatment, newspaper is a good substrate and helps to keep the cages clean. Dr. Klingenberg reminded us that *we*, as keepers, must be fastidious in our care.

Renal Disease:

Dr. Klingenberg stated that "We're seeing this a lot now." The symptoms are the same as in iguanas, but we need to do blood work to be sure. This at least, is easy to do. Diagnosing Renal Disease requires an exam, history, fecals and blood work. If not responding to treatment, move onto x-ray, ultrasound and endoscopy. A dragon's uric acid won't go up until the dragon is far gone. Blood work gives good guidelines. Dr. Klingenberg recommends that we do blood work before the treatment to see if liver damage exists first.

Why renal problems?

- ❖ Excessive basking? In the wild, bearded dragons could escape to cool, moist areas. Dragons can't do this in most captive environments. Dr. Klingenberg believes that dragons need a damp resting area to go to escape the heat once they are finished basking.
- ❖ Lack of veggies?
- ❖ Too much protein? This has not been studied but dry pellets are very scary because pellets are high in protein & very low in moisture. That's 2 strikes against the idea.
- ❖ Oversupplementation of minerals? D3 and calcium together are very bad. Give calcium as a dusting 2-3 times a week and D3 once every 2 weeks for adults unless they go outside and then no D3.

At Fire and Ice Dragons, we pride ourselves on the high quality care we give our dragons. Repti-sand, our substrate of choice for babies, is changed every 2-3 weeks and scooped continually throughout the day. We find that babies do best on fine Repti-sand since babies have trouble finding prey which tend to hide under newspaper. We do use newspaper for adults since it affords substrate changes several x per day—a cleaner, though less attractive way to go. Special thanks to Carole for taking such copious notes at the lecture.

Next issue: Parasites. 

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NEW F&I HATCHINGS:

- ❖ **Reds** – Our long awaited reds are here! Our 2002 breedings include **Bloods, Blood x Redflame and Blood x Redflame / SF Orange**. These will go very fast!
- ❖ **Citrus x Orange Glow** – This breeding has been such a huge success in the color and stamina of the hatchlings that we have repeated the breeding. We only have 2 clutches left for 2002 and they are gorgeous!
- ❖ We ship nationwide, accept money orders, Visa, Amex, MC, Discover and PayPal. Email terri@fireandicedragons.com.

DRAGON SPOTLIGHT:

Name: “Cairo”

Color Morph: ORANGE GLOW

Stats: 18 1/2” long and weighs 430 grams



Cairo is the father of our Citrus x Orange Glow cross. What makes Cairo so special is his jaw dropping brilliant yellow orange color and laid back disposition. Of all the dragons we take to shows, Cairo is the one that commands everyone’s attention.

He was named for his regal demeanor. Cairo is Terri’s personal favorite. He’s a take charge kind of guy with the ladies and has a 100% success rate as a breeder. When he’s not showing his off his big black beard, Cairo likes to relax under a good newspaper. He has an intelligent facial expression and has no trouble casting a filthy look when his beauty rest is disturbed. For any of you with a dragon out of this male, you have great stock!

MERCH:

We launched a new line of dragon products! Dragon Tracks™, Reptile Imprint Kits come in a variety of clay colors for creating a permanent imprint your dragon’s foot print. Dragon Tracks™, Reptile Imprint Kits come with black leather chord for creating necklaces, ornaments or wallhangings. Kits are \$12 and can be painted with your acrylic paints. Ready-made necklaces are available with black leather chord for \$8 or macramé hemp for \$15. (Shipping not included.)

DRAGON FACT:

In Australia, Bearded Dragons prefer vertical perches as opposed to our horizontal driftwood types. They are often seen perching on the sides of trees!

PEDIGREE CERTIFICATES:

Many of you share our opinion that the lack of accurate record keeping among Bearded Dragon breeders is appalling. Poor or non-existent record keeping causes serious inbreeding problems such as congenital defects.

For this reason, we are now sending full color Pedigree Certificates with every dragon purchase that include stats on the dragon as well as photos and stats on parents. We hope this will assist you in developing a responsible breeding program.

RESOURCES:

A good resource for beginner dragon owners is a discussion list called the Pogona forum. Sign up at pogona-subscribe@yahoogroups.com. Make sure you opt for the digest version because the list is huge and you’ll get a zillion emails a day

F&I CARE FACT:

We buy distilled water to use for all our bearded dragons, both for misting and for drinking. Mineral water is unregulated and chlorine is definitely NOT found in Australian water! If it’s poison to you, it’s poison to them. The best price we’ve found is \$.99 at local grocery stores.

NEW OWNER REMINDERS:

- ❖ **Veggies** – Romaine lettuce, spinach and kale are safe, full of calcium and are needed DAILY. Kiwi or bits of cantaloupe is OK to try for babies as treats. Adults can also have frozen mixed veggies, thawed to room temperature but ours will never eat this.
- ❖ **Crickets:** Feed babies 3 x a day about 10-15 dusted crickets of the same size as the space between the dragon's eyes when viewed from the top.
- ❖ **Water:** We mist all dragons at 6pm with distilled water at room temp on the top of their heads until they start to drink and lap the water off their faces. Dragons look sleepy and eyes sunken when they are dehydrated and this must be prevented.
- ❖ **Temps:** Remember to place two thermometers in the cage: one on the basking spot (should read 105 degrees after 2-3 hours) and the other at the far cool end (should read 85 degrees). Dragons need to thermo-regulate to stay healthy.
- ❖ **Cages:** Glass tanks are OK but the right size is important. For babies 6-8" a 10-gallon tank is fine but the baby will rapidly outgrow this and need a 20-gallon long tank as soon as his body reaches 10" or so. This is because at that size, the dragon can no longer get away from the heat and it will cook and die! On the other hand, starting babies in too large a tank means they can't locate prey. We use Profile Extended Storage Bins in "clear" which is really milky white for all our babies. These bins are about 22" long and cost \$17 at Staples. The screen tops can be found at Lowe's for about \$6. The dome type heat lamp sits on the screen. This arrangements works well for babies since it's low cost until you can move the dragons into a really nice permanent home and the milky white sides of the bins prevent the dragon from becoming terrified in new surroundings and not eating for the first few days.
- ❖ **Poops:** Baby dragons poop at least once per day. Adults usually poop once a day.



Bearded Dragons are found in the red center of Australia where the sand is really...red! 

SEXING DRAGONS:

There are a few ways to tell the sex of a dragon.

- ❖ When held in the palm of the hand and gently bending the tail back across the back somewhat in order to see the hemipenal bulges in a male. Bulges runs laterally from the vent toward the tail and usually create a channel down the middle. In females, there is usually one bulge centered just after the vent and the indentations form an inverted V.
- ❖ Cloacal opening in males is wider than in females.
- ❖ The male has a wider head when viewed from the top.

Usually a combination of these observations will allow for a fairly accurate assessment of whether or not you have a male or female. 

DRAGON FACT:

Bearded Dragons can have as few as 7 eggs per clutch up to 45 eggs per clutch and from 1-9 clutches in a single season. However, limit the dragon to 3 clutches per year, wait to breed until the animals are 1-2 years old so they achieve maximum size. Breeding stunts the growth of dragons if bred too young and egg binding can occur.

Also clutches will be smaller. 

BEARDIE BEHAVIORS:

By far the most endearing behavior in our beloved Bearded Dragons is Arm Waving. What can be cuter than a dragon lifting his or her arm and waving "Hello" to a fellow dragon. Most amusing is that Arm Waving literally means, "Hi! I'm a Bearded Dragon." 

HEALTH TIPS:

One of the best items you can buy for your dragon is a gram scale. By weighing the dragon regularly you can establish a record that will alert you to abnormal behavior. We tape an index card to the side of the cage and note dates, weights, food per day eaten and poops. When Terri worked for the Baltimore Zoo she learned that good record keeping is indispensable when determining whether or not a change in behavior gives reason for concern. 