



FIRE and ICE DRAGONS

Specializing in HIGH COLOR MORPH
BEARDED DRAGONS
and Crested Geckos



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Bearded Dragons & Parasites

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“Piemur” Sandfire Orange x Red
Flame Male

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There are many parasites that plague reptiles and a few are deadly to Bearded Dragons, especially in captive environments. The most important thing we can do is to be on the alert for signs of parasites in our dragons.

These signs include:

- ◆ Refusal to feed.
- ◆ Weight loss – This is another reason for investing in a gram scale. We weigh all of our dragons every week as a tool in assessing dragon health.
- ◆ Diarrhea (mucus or blood in stools, or a change in color or smell of stools).
- ◆ Inactivity – Healthy dragons are alert, bright-eyed, usually standing erect.
- ◆ Dehydrated appearance – Dehydrated dragons have a sunken look to the eyes, dark semi-circles under the back half of the lower lid.

There are hundreds of parasites that can attack lizards but 3 stand out as the most commonly seen in Bearded Dragons: Coccidia, Pinworms and Amebiasis, caused by Entamoeba.

Coccidia:

Common protozoan that generally do not cause the animal any problems in the wild but in captivity, can wreak havoc. Symptoms include mild to severe diarrhea, anorexia (refusal to feed), weakness, lethargy and death. Diagnosis by fecal smears or floats on fresh stools. Treatment: Albon.

Pinworms:

Very common in lizards, Pinworms live in the lower GI tract. Diagnosis is by fecal flotation. Treatment: Panacur.

Amebiasis:

This protozoan can be extremely lethal. Some animals carry this with no problem while others waste and die. According to Dr. Klingenberg, clinical signs are highly variable but include anorexia, dehydration and mucus laden or bloody stools. Diagnosis can require analysis of several fresh smears to identify amoeba, or multi-nucleated cysts. Treatment: Metronidazole.

In all 3 cases, Coccidia, Pinworms and Amebiasis, the parasites are acquired through contaminated prey items, food, water and cages.

What you can do:

Take your dragon and a fresh stool sample to a reptile vet to be checked for parasites. Change substrates every 2-3 weeks and scoop feces several times a day. Clean water and food dishes daily. Do not recycle prey food from the cage to the cricket bin or from one cage to another. Do not leave uneaten crickets in cages more than 24 hours. We pull prey out at night and flush crickets or superworms down the toilet. Wash your hands after handling reptiles. If you support a colony of dragons never use one sand scoop for multiple cages.

Next issue: Brumation. 

DRAGONS FOR SALE:

- ❖ **Citrus x Orange Glow Subadults**– We have a few HOLD BACK Quality, subadult dragons for sale!!! These gorgeous dragons are the most brilliantly colored we have seen to date and they will be ready to breed by early spring. Call now! They will go fast!!! 410-252-6687.
- ❖ **Blood Dragon Hatchlings** are now 3 weeks old and we are waiting for their first shed in 1-2 weeks to determine color quality!
- ❖ **Citrus x Citrus, Blood x Redflame / SF Orange** are expected to hatch any day. Stay tuned!
- ❖ We ship nationwide, accept money orders, Visa, Amex, MC, Discover and PayPal. Email terri@fireandicedragons.com. 🐉

DRAGON SPOTLIGHT:**Name: “Ramoth”****Color Morph: CITRUS****Stats: 17” long and weighs 420 grams this week**

Ramoth is the Mother of our Citrus x Citrus (“Dune”) and Citrus x Orange Glow (“Cairo”) breedings for 2002. She was purchased at \$800 from a great private breeder and has been worth every cent. She laid 200 eggs this year alone!

Ramoth was named for the golden queen dragon in Anne McCaffrey’s *Dragon Riders of Pern* series and she shares her regal demeanor! She insists on 1” of sand on top of the soil/vermiculite nest box mixture before she will dig at all!

In appearance, Ramoth has an elegant look to her head that is reminiscent of our leucistic dragons and

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so we suspect that they must share a common bloodline. But her most defining feature is her brilliant lemony “Citrus” color, almost neon, from her nose to the tip of her tail. Best of all, she maintains her color all the time even when she is cooled down or in new environments! We are selectively breeding for this quality so Ramoth is an important dragon in this aspect of our breeding program. This is important information for all of you who purchased one of Ramoth’s babies for your breeding program.

Both Beauty and Brains, Ramoth responds to her name and knows full well that she is Queen of the Fire and Ice castle! 🐉

PEDIGREE CERTIFICATES:

At Fire and Ice Dragons, we believe in maintaining accurate records on all of our dragons. Any dog owner knows how important is to know what’s behind the animal we are bringing home. For this reason, we are now sending Pedigree Certificates with every dragon purchase that include stats on the dragon as well as photos and stats on both parents. We hope this will assist you in developing a responsible breeding program. 🐉

RESOURCES:

A good resource for information on parasites is Dr. Roger Klingenberg’s book, *Understanding Reptile Parasites*. 🐉

CRICKETS: BUYING & KEEPING

A good source for cheap crickets is Southern Cricket. For \$10 plus shipping, you can purchase 1,000 crickets which will be delivered to your door and will last a month for a pet owner. Keep crickets in a Tupperware Rough Tote bin from Walmart or Target. Cut out a hole in the top and hot glue mesh over the hole. Throw in some corncob bedding (found at pet stores), pile unmedicated chick starter (from feed store at \$.25 per pound) in one corner and a cut up potato or orange every day or every other day. Inexpensive, easy, saves you from running to the pet store twice a week and you just gutloaded your crickets at the same time! See www.southerncricket.com.

CARE SHEET:

- ❖ **Veggies** – The Fab Four - Romaine lettuce, Spinach, Kale and Dandelion greens (you can get dandelion at Superfresh or in organic food stores). These are safe, full of calcium and are needed DAILY.
- ❖ **Treats:** We just discovered that fresh cut up cranberries are relished by our subadult and adult dragons and are good for the renal tract and loaded with vitamin C. We've also added Collard and Mustard Greens to their Fall diet for a change of pace but be careful with changing diets for babies! You are better off sticking to the 4 staple greens until babies are 6 months or so.
- ❖ **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.
- ❖ **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 arrangement 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 bins prevent the dragon from becoming terrified in new surroundings.
- ❖ **Poops:** Baby dragons poop at least once per day. Adults usually poop once a day.

SUPERWORMS - MYTH & VALUE

Contrary to the rumors, superworms do not eat through the stomachs of Bearded Dragons. In fact, superworms are nutritious and come in small sizes for baby dragons. We do NOT use mealworms which are mostly carapace or wax worms which are like candy—the dragons love them but some dragons will then refuse to eat anything else. 🐉

BEARDIE BEHAVIORS: IS HE SICK?

How can we tell if our dragons are sick? The first thing to do is to check temps. Dragons bask to crank up their internal temp so they can go digest breakfast (or brunch, lunch, supper and dinner!) If the temp at the basking spot isn't 105 to 110 degrees after the lights have been on 2-3 hours, they will have a hard time digesting food, it can sour in their gut and make them sick.

Whenever we get a call or email asking about a "sick" dragon, our first question is, "What is the temp at the basking spot?" The second question is, "What is the temp at the cool side?" It MUST be 20 degrees cooler than the basking spot or 85 degrees, to allow too hot dragons to cool off. If temps are not exactly right, dragons will get sick and die.

This most important aspect of dragon care should be rechecked every week at least, this time of year, since air conditioners, fall temps, heat, etc. all impact the temp inside your dragon's cage. 🐉

CAGES NOW AVAILABLE!

Due to popular request, we are offering our 36" and 48" white and glass cages for sale. The 36" is \$250 including shipping. Email terri@fireandicedragons.com.

You can request the previous issue of this newsletter. Email info@fireandicedragons.com and include the subject, "Previous Issue Requested." In the last issue:

- ◆ Diseases in Bearded Dragons
- ◆ Sexing Bearded Dragons
- ◆ Dragon Spotlight, Orange Glow "Cairo"
- ◆ Beardie Behaviors – Arm Waving

Enjoy! 🐉

