

Animal Care Club News Letter

Issue 4, July 2020

Intro

As we look forward to lock down easing, this week I have taken a look at how it has affected some of the animals, with a focus on the bearded dragon (Merlin).

Fig 1. Merlin in my garden.



Bearded Dragon

Bearded Dragons are a popular reptile and need a big vivarium. They love to climb and interact with people.

Prior to lock down Merlin had a lot of stimulus with many students talking to her, and her watching the daily routines of the class room.

General Care

Bearded Dragons like to live in a heated vivarium with a warmer end for basking and a cooler end when they don't need to bask.

They eat a variety of foods including insects, vegetables and fruit. Which has supplements sprinkled on top.

During animal care club she would often come out for a bath too.



Fig 2. Merlin in the bath during creature care club (Pre-Lockdown).

Enrichment

As Lock down continued I noticed Merlin started to show signs of boredom. While I continued to get her out and care for her, she was no

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longer getting the stimulation that she was from my classroom.

She had started 'glass surfing' and scratching at the door.

During a little research, I found some new evidence from the university of Lincoln. If you are interested in Reptile welfare it is well worth a look. The following link should take you there.

<https://www.lincoln.ac.uk/news/2014/09/970.asp>

After the research I enlisted some help from my skilled and very tolerant husband! He made some changes to Merlin's house.

Fig 3. New level and ramp in Merlin's vivarium.



It is worth a mention too, that when I first received Merlin from the RSPCA she was not very mobile and her balance was poor. Since being out more she is much more mobile, falls over less and is able to climb.

The physiotherapy she receives in my care is certainly working.

Further adjustments to her environment and routine include moving furniture round in her Vivarium, giving her a tray of sand to dig in, coming out side regularly (weather permitting), and feeding many more flowers and weeds from the garden.



Fig 4. Merlin enjoying the outside and some pansies.

FUN FACT, In the wild, bearded dragons can be seen to wave at each other!

Coming In The Next Issue

- All about the gecko