

Bearded Dragon Plant Safety Reference

55+ species across three safety tiers — safe, caution, and never use Latin names, edibility status, and keeper notes for every entry

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How to use this reference

Tier 1 — Safe: Non-toxic species confirmed suitable for bearded dragon enclosures. Always quarantine nursery plants for 4–6 weeks and replace nursery soil before use.

Tier 2 — Caution: Non-toxic species with conditions: high oxalates, laxative effect, strong essential oils, or placement restrictions. Read the note carefully before use.

Tier 3 — Never Use: Toxic species that cause GI distress, organ damage, or death. No amount of any part of these plants is appropriate in or near a reptile enclosure.

Edible column: Refers to whether a bearded dragon can safely consume plant material from a living plant in the enclosure. Edible does not mean nutritionally optimal — always maintain a complete diet alongside any in-enclosure plants.

Quarantine rule: Applies to ALL nursery plants regardless of tier. Systemic pesticides are absorbed into plant tissue and persist for weeks. Buy from reptile-specialist suppliers or certified organic growers to skip this step.

Tier 1 — Safe for bearded dragon enclosures

Non-toxic species. Always quarantine nursery plants 4–6 weeks and replace nursery soil before use.

Common name	Latin name	Edible?	Keeper notes
Aloe vera	<i>Aloe vera</i>	Small amounts only	Non-toxic but acts as a mild laxative in large quantities. Incidental grazing from a plant in the enclosure is fine. Do not offer it deliberately as food.
Basil	<i>Ocimum basilicum</i>	Yes — rotate only	Fully edible and enjoyed by most dragons. Phosphorus-heavy, so treat as a rotating snack plant rather than a staple. Deteriorates above 90°F; keep on the cool end.
Bolivian Wandering Jew	<i>Tradescantia fluminensis</i>	Yes	Safe ground-cover option. Edible and grows readily. Not to be confused with <i>Tradescantia zebrina</i> , which causes contact irritation. Verify species name at purchase.

Borage	<i>Borago officinalis</i>	Yes	Edible herb with star-shaped flowers. Grows quickly and tolerates light grazing. Cool-end placement extends its enclosure life. Flowers are particularly popular with some dragons.
Bromeliad	<i>Bromeliaceae spp.</i>	Yes (rarely eaten)	Non-toxic and structurally interesting. Most bromeliads tolerate the temperature and humidity range of a beardie enclosure. Avoid varieties with sharp-tipped leaves.
Calendula	<i>Calendula officinalis</i>	Yes	Edible flowers and leaves. Safe, bright, and grows well in outdoor rotation. Bring into the enclosure as a supervised foraging treat rather than a permanent fixture.
Cat grass / Wheatgrass	<i>Triticum aestivum</i>	Yes	Nutritious and completely safe. Grows fast from seed, tolerates repeated grazing, and recovers well outdoors. One of the easiest rotation plants to maintain.
Clover	<i>Trifolium spp.</i>	Yes	Highly nutritious and well tolerated. Short-lived in a hot, dry enclosure but grows quickly enough to rotate continuously from an outdoor pot. Red and white varieties both safe.
Dandelion	<i>Taraxacum officinale</i>	Yes	One of the most nutritious plants you can offer. High calcium, edible flowers and leaves, and most dragons eat it enthusiastically. Grow from organic seed to avoid pesticide contamination.
Echeveria	<i>Echeveria spp.</i>	Yes	Non-toxic succulent rosette. Tolerates intense UVB and low humidity well. Position mid-tank or cool end. Avoid direct placement under the basking bulb at full surface temperature.
Ficus	<i>Ficus benjamina</i>	Avoid leaves	The plant itself is non-toxic but the milky sap in stems and leaves can cause mild irritation. Suitable as structural decor if placed where a dragon cannot graze heavily on it.
Haworthia	<i>Haworthia spp.</i>	Yes	One of the best enclosure plants available. Compact, slow-growing, durable under intense UVB, and non-toxic. Position cool end or mid-tank. Species include H. reinwardtii and H. cooperi.
Hibiscus	<i>Hibiscus rosa-sinensis</i>	Yes	Flowers and leaves are edible and readily accepted. Gets stripped quickly when placed inside the enclosure. Best used as a rotating foraging plant or a supervised out-of-enclosure snack.
Hoya australis	<i>Hoya australis</i>	Yes (rarely eaten)	Hardy climbing vine. Handles the heat and light of a beardie enclosure better than most tropicals. Non-toxic and rarely grazed. Good for adding vertical structure in a larger setup.
Lavender	<i>Lavandula angustifolia</i>	Small amounts only	Non-toxic and safe if nibbled. The essential oil concentration means large amounts are not ideal. Occasional grazing from a potted plant in the enclosure is not a concern.
Lemon balm	<i>Melissa officinalis</i>	Yes	Edible herb in the mint family. Safe for bearded dragons, grows readily, and tolerates light grazing. Keep on the cool end and rotate when it shows heat stress.

Mulberry leaves	<i>Morus spp.</i>	Yes	Nutritious and edible. High in calcium. Mulberry leaves are used as feed for silkworms, which are themselves a popular beardedie feeder — the leaves share similar nutritional qualities.
Nasturtium	<i>Tropaeolum majus</i>	Yes — whole plant	Entire plant is edible including flowers, leaves, and stems. Grows rapidly and recovers well between rotations. Handles enclosure conditions better than most herbs. Excellent rotation option.
Oregano	<i>Origanum vulgare</i>	Yes — rotate only	Edible herb. Safe in the amounts a dragon would graze from an in-enclosure pot. Strong essential oil concentration means it should be a rotating snack plant, not a permanent staple.
Parsley	<i>Petroselinum crispum</i>	Occasionally only	Edible but high in oxalates. Occasional grazing from an in-enclosure plant is fine. Should not be the primary or only plant available. Grows well in warm, bright conditions with good drainage.
Ponytail palm	<i>Beaucarnea recurvata</i>	Yes	Desert-adapted species that genuinely thrives in beardedie enclosure conditions. Non-toxic, slow-growing, and compact for years. The bulbous water-storing base handles extended dry periods naturally.
Portulacaria afra	<i>Portulacaria afra</i>	Yes	Safe dwarf jade. Reddish-brown stems and small rounded leaves. Distinct from the mildly toxic <i>Crassula ovata</i> — always verify the Latin name at purchase. Tolerates regular grazing and 90–95°F ambient temperatures.
Prickly pear (spineless)	<i>Opuntia spp.</i>	Yes	Most heat-tolerant enclosure plant on this list. Edible pads with good calcium content. Spineless variety only — run fingers across areoles before use to check for hidden glochids even on labelled-spineless specimens.
Purslane	<i>Portulaca oleracea</i>	Yes	Nutritious edible succulent. High in omega-3 fatty acids and calcium. Grows as a low spreading plant and tolerates heat well. Often found as a garden weed — only use pesticide-free, confirmed organic sources.
Rosemary	<i>Salvia rosmarinus</i>	Small amounts only	Non-toxic. The concentrated essential oils mean large consumption is not ideal, but incidental grazing from an in-enclosure plant causes no harm. Handles dry heat reasonably well.
Sage	<i>Salvia officinalis</i>	Small amounts only	Non-toxic in the amounts a dragon would graze. Strong essential oil content means it should supplement rather than dominate the available in-enclosure plant material.
Sedum	<i>Sedum spp.</i>	Yes	Most sedum species are non-toxic succulents that handle dry, bright conditions well. Avoid <i>Sedum acre</i> (biting stonecrop), which contains irritant alkaloids. Other commonly available sedums are safe.
Squash / Courgette plant	<i>Cucurbita spp.</i>	Yes	Leaves, flowers, and flesh are all safe and nutritious. The plant grows rapidly and is well-suited to outdoor rotation. Flowers in particular are a popular and accepted treat.

Thyme	<i>Thymus vulgaris</i>	Yes — rotate only	Edible herb. Safe for bearded dragons and grows well under bright conditions. Treat as a rotating snack plant rather than a permanent fixture at this temperature.
Tillandsia / Air plants	<i>Tillandsia spp.</i>	Yes (rarely eaten)	No soil required. Attach to cork bark or driftwood. Non-toxic, ignored by most dragons, and needs only occasional misting. One of the lowest-maintenance permanent enclosure options available.
Turtle vine	<i>Callisia repens</i>	Yes	Low-growing edible ground cover. Tolerates heat reasonably well and provides interesting texture at floor level. Grows back after grazing if given recovery time outdoors.
Viola / Pansy	<i>Viola spp.</i>	Yes	Edible flowers and leaves. Readily accepted by most dragons. Not particularly heat-tolerant, so treat as a supervised foraging plant rather than a permanent enclosure specimen.

Tier 2 — Use with caution

Non-toxic but carries conditions. Read the keeper notes carefully before placing in the enclosure.

Common name	Latin name	Edible?	Keeper notes
Aloe vera (large amounts)	<i>Aloe vera</i>	Restrict	Laxative effect when consumed in significant quantity. A plant in the enclosure that gets occasionally grazed is not a concern. Deliberate supplemental feeding is not recommended.
Ficus	<i>Ficus benjamina</i>	Avoid leaves	The latex sap in stems and leaves causes mild irritation. Suitable as structural decor positioned out of easy grazing reach. A committed grazer should not have access to this plant.
Parsley (heavy feeding)	<i>Petroselinum crispum</i>	Restrict	High oxalate content interferes with calcium absorption if consumed in large quantities. Occasional grazing from a pot is fine. Should not be the dominant plant available.
Peppermint	<i>Mentha x piperita</i>	Small amounts only	Non-toxic but contains concentrated menthol. Small-scale grazing from an in-enclosure plant is not harmful. Not suitable as a staple rotation plant. Keep as an occasional option only.
Pothos	<i>Epipremnum aureum</i>	No	Calcium oxalate crystals cause mouth irritation and GI distress if eaten. Popular in bioactive setups for hardness. Only safe if placed completely out of grazing reach. Committed grazers should not have access.
Rosemary	<i>Salvia rosmarinus</i>	Small amounts only	Non-toxic but essential oil concentration is high. Incidental grazing is not a problem. Heavy grazing from a plant left in permanently is not ideal. Treat as an occasional supervised option.

Snake plant	<i>Dracaena trifasciata</i>	No	Listed as toxic to dogs and cats by ASPCA. Reptile-specific data is limited but consistent. Not confirmed safe for bearded dragons. Suitable as structural decor only if the dragon cannot reach the leaves.
Spider plant	<i>Chlorophytum comosum</i>	No	Mildly hallucinogenic compounds reported. Non-lethal but causes digestive upset. Attractive to cats for the same reason. Do not place within grazing reach of a bearded dragon.
Wandering Jew (zebrina)	<i>Tradescantia zebrina</i>	No	Contact irritant that causes skin and mouth inflammation. Distinct from the safe Bolivian Wandering Jew (<i>Tradescantia fluminensis</i>). These two are frequently confused at nurseries. Always verify species.

Tier 3 — Never use

Toxic species. No amount of any part of these plants is appropriate in or near a reptile enclosure.

Common name	Latin name	Edible?	Keeper notes
Agave	<i>Agave spp.</i>	Highly toxic	Sap causes severe GI irritation and potential tissue damage. Sharp spines also present a physical injury risk in an enclosure. Do not use any agave species.
Azalea / Rhododendron	<i>Rhododendron spp.</i>	Highly toxic	Contains grayanotoxins. Causes vomiting, cardiac arrhythmia, and potentially fatal toxicity. One of the most dangerous common garden plants. Never enters any reptile enclosure.
Bird of paradise	<i>Strelitzia reginae</i>	Toxic	Seeds and fruit are toxic to vertebrates. The plant is frequently sold in home decor contexts and appears in the same retail spaces where keepers shop for enclosure plants.
Caladium	<i>Caladium spp.</i>	Toxic	Dense calcium oxalate crystals throughout all plant tissue. Causes severe mouth and GI irritation. Colourful and widely sold — visually attractive as enclosure decor but completely unsuitable.
Christmas cactus	<i>Schlumbergera spp.</i>	Mildly toxic	Not a true cactus. Fibrous plant material causes GI irritation if ingested. The toxicity is low but the plant has no enclosure benefit that a safe species could not provide.
Crassula ovata (Jade Plant)	<i>Crassula ovata</i>	Mildly toxic	Consistently confused with the safe <i>Portulacaria afra</i> at nurseries. Both sold as jade plant. <i>Crassula ovata</i> has green stems and larger, glossier leaves. If the tag shows no Latin name, do not buy it.
Croton	<i>Codiaeum variegatum</i>	Toxic	Toxic sap causes skin and GI irritation. Widely sold as a colourful houseplant. Despite its visual appeal, it has no place in any reptile enclosure.
Dracaena	<i>Dracaena spp.</i>	Toxic	Toxic to reptiles and most vertebrates. Contains saponins that cause vomiting and other GI symptoms. Often sold as an easy-care houseplant. Do not use in any form.

Elephant ear	<i>Colocasia / Alocasia spp.</i>	Toxic	High calcium oxalate concentration throughout all plant tissue. Causes intense mouth and throat irritation immediately on contact. Widely sold in tropical plant sections.
English ivy	<i>Hedera helix</i>	Toxic	Contains hederagenin and other glycosides. Toxic to reptiles and most vertebrates if ingested. The trailing form makes it visually appealing for enclosures — but it does not belong in one.
Euphorbia (all species)	<i>Euphorbia spp.</i>	Highly toxic	All euphorbias produce milky white latex sap that is caustic to skin and mucous membranes. Toxic if ingested. Pencil cactus, firesticks, and African milk tree are common examples sold in nursery cactus sections.
Foxglove	<i>Digitalis purpurea</i>	Highly toxic	Contains cardiac glycosides. Highly toxic to all vertebrates in any quantity. Causes cardiac arrhythmia and can be fatal. Found in garden centres and occasionally in mixed houseplant displays.
Holly	<i>Ilex spp.</i>	Toxic	Berries and leaves contain saponins and other toxic compounds. Toxic to reptiles and most vertebrates. Seasonal availability increases the risk of accidental purchase.
Iris	<i>Iris spp.</i>	Toxic	All parts are toxic. The rhizome is the most concentrated part but leaves and flowers also present risk. Causes GI distress and potential organ damage.
Lantana	<i>Lantana camara</i>	Highly toxic	Highly toxic to most vertebrates. Causes liver damage and neurological symptoms. Commonly sold as a garden plant and flowering pot plant. Never use in or near a reptile enclosure.
Mistletoe	<i>Viscum album</i>	Highly toxic	Highly toxic. Contains toxic lectins and phoratoxins. Seasonal decoration item that should be kept completely out of any area accessible to reptiles.
Oleander	<i>Nerium oleander</i>	Highly toxic	One of the most toxic common garden plants. Contains cardiac glycosides that are lethal in small amounts. Toxic whether fresh or dried. No amount of any part of this plant is safe.
Philodendron	<i>Philodendron spp.</i>	Toxic	Calcium oxalate crystals throughout all plant tissue. Causes immediate mouth and throat irritation. Widely sold and sometimes recommended in bioactive setups — it is not safe for bearded dragons.
Poinsettia	<i>Euphorbia pulcherrima</i>	Mildly toxic	A euphorbia. The latex sap causes mouth and GI irritation. Toxicity is lower than other euphorbias but still not appropriate for any reptile enclosure. Seasonal availability increases risk.
Sago palm	<i>Cycas revoluta</i>	Highly toxic	Highly toxic to all vertebrates. Cycasin causes irreversible liver failure. Even small amounts are potentially lethal. Found in mixed garden displays and home decor sections. Learn to recognise this plant by sight.

Tobacco	<i>Nicotiana spp.</i>	Highly toxic	Nicotine and other alkaloids are acutely toxic to reptiles. Any part of the tobacco plant entering an enclosure presents serious risk. Ornamental varieties are sold in garden centres.
Tomato (leaves and stems)	<i>Solanum lycopersicum</i>	Toxic	The fruit is safe in small amounts but leaves, stems, and unripe fruit contain solanine and tomatine. Keep dragons away from tomato plant material. The fruit itself can be offered as an occasional treat only.
Tulip bulbs	<i>Tulipa spp.</i>	Toxic	Bulbs are the most toxic part but all parts carry risk. Causes GI distress, cardiac issues, and can be fatal in sufficient quantity. Seasonal risk when bulbs appear in garden centres.

This reference is compiled from keeper experience and published reptile toxicology data. It is not a substitute for veterinary advice. If your bearded dragon has consumed a plant and you are concerned, contact a reptile vet immediately. Toxicity data for reptiles is less comprehensive than for mammals — when in doubt, exclude the plant. Always quarantine nursery plants regardless of species.

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