



## IN SEARCH OF CANARIES...

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# The Joys of Owning a Canary

This is not intended to be a scientific paper on the care and well being of Canaries. This is to bring to people the joy of owning a pet that requires very little special care and gives back a thousand fold in pure pleasure and enjoyment. Listening to the melodious song of such a bird is likened to sitting on the grass beside a river or stream—pure relaxation.

Canaries have taken a decided back seat in the past few years. The advent of the quarantine system has changed the way people think about birds. As the availability of the fancy finches and hookbills waned, the domestic breeding took over. As the market for handfed birds gained momentum, the prices went up and the breeding of the larger birds became more of a monetary advantage. This, then, caused people to turn aside from the smaller birds. About this time, the growth of the electronic equipment brought more sound into the homes and the song of the Canary was lost in the overpowering sounds of the stereo and TV.

However, there are some of the Canary fanciers left in this world and we are trying to bring the pleasure of owning this bird back into popularity.

The Canary has shown up in history as far back as 4,000 years. The Chinese were the early fanciers of the song of this bird. Many of these people kept the birds in small cages and carried them wherever they went.

As the years progressed, the

inevitable desire for change came about and slowly but surely Canaries took on a new appearance and new songs. The colors have gone from the original dark or green through the yellow, gray, white and red in solids and in variegation. The sizes of the birds have changed, as well as the shape and now we see many styles of feather arrangements.

The Rollers are the quietest of the Canaries as they sing with their mouths closed. The other types of birds are the warblers and with their open mouths, they are loud.

Many of the strains have disappeared, but they were different mainly because of their type of song. The trillers, choppers, warblers and others have all become warblers. The Roller remains with his own delightful song.

We have Borders, Rollers, Frills, Belgian Fancy, Scotch Fancy, Lancasters, Glosters, Columbus Fancy and the color bred birds from white to red. Each of these take a lot of the same care but each type takes a little extra care in addition. The best way to see these birds is to attend a bird show where all types are exhibited. Only then will one be able to understand how much work has gone into the hobby and to what extent the breeding has produced in the way of varieties.

Canaries are a joy to watch and to hear. They are a friendly bird and take well to being with people. The males, kept singly, produce more music and enjoyable sounds per square inch than

most any other bird. The sound of a Canary singing is both pleasing and relaxing and does much to relieve the tensions of today's work place.

A big advantage in the breeding of Canaries is the space to be allotted. Being small, Canaries take less room and cage space than the big birds. Cleaning and care, therefore, takes less time. And Canaries cost less than most hookbills.

The diet is simple. Seed, greens, fruit and vegetables comprise the Canary diet and this is given in small doses so that all but the seed is found in any home refrigerator.

The location of the cage in one's home is important. It must be free from draft and not too close to a sunny window as the variable temperature through a window causes the same effect as a plain draft.

When buying a Canary it is best to get one in full song. You buy a Canary for the pleasure, so be sure the song suits you before you buy the bird. Most breeders train their birds so the song is pleasing to the ear. Young birds have a natural song, but they also develop faults as they pick up sounds of other birds and other non bird-related sounds. A good tutor is necessary to instill proper song in young birds. A strong tutor will induce young birds to sing like he does so all the birds will eventually sound pretty much alike. If you buy a bird you have not heard sing, it is a good idea to get in writing that if the song is not pleasing to you the bird can be returned or exchanged for another.

When a bird is moved it may not sing for a few days or, perhaps, a week or two. You must be patient with the bird until he feels quite at home with his surroundings and with you. To induce such a bird to sing, play classical music. Birds like the high pitched sounds of a violin or like instrument. They also like the sound of the vacuum cleaner or running water so any of these can be used as an inducement.

If your bird has a song that is full and hearty and lasts for at least 30 seconds or longer, you will find the joy received is in an outrageous proportion to the size of the animal.

Let's keep these Canaries happy, healthy and singing. ➔