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## Budgies . . .

### Some Opinions and a Routine That Has Worked for Me

by Harold Trethaway

Show birds will be, at least should be, almost ideally balanced for size, type and head, and strange as it may seem these birds seldom are the ones who produce the winners in the next generation, though of course there are exceptions which are worth their weight in gold and will not be for sale. If these show birds would produce birds as good or better than themselves regularly, all a person would have to do is buy one pair of top show birds and he would be set for life. Nature is just not set up that way.

The correct way is to start with stock birds; these are birds from the same lines as the show birds, but are over balanced, either in head, size, multiple spotted, flecked on head, etc. These birds when mated correctly to take advantage of their "excesses" are the components in building a bloodline. Don't expect to get all show birds, but once you learn how to balance your "ingredients" you should come up with some show birds and some of the excess birds to breed next time around.

Though there are pros and cons on the subject, I flight my cocks and hens together, old birds in one flight and young in another. I believe it keeps the hens in much better condition with the cocks courting them. Some say that a hen will pick a mate in the flight and then not mate with the cock you have chosen for her. I have yet to see one of my hens refuse to mate with the cock I chose if she was in breeding condition when put up.

Assessing when your hens are ready to breed is one of the most important things you must learn, and putting her up to breed when she is ready, not when you are ready is equally important. I like to put up a hen when she is just coming out of a moult, rough feathered, nice *tan* cere; she is calling, chewing and flying back and forth with a cock. When a hen is like this she goes up no matter what month it is.

I believe birds prefer a varied diet, so to 12 parts of a regular parakeet feed mix, I add 1 part treat or tonic seed and 1 part sunflower seed. I also use a dry mix of chicken egg crumbles, Petamine, dog meal, calf manna (a milk replacer pellet) and Japanese millet. This mixture is kept in flights and cages at all times. Each

morning they get a mixture of soaked race-horse oats, hard boiled egg, brewers yeast, wheat germ oil, boiled brown rice, and more calf manna, which has been moistened to make it crumbly. I mix this in the evening and let it set overnight. I feed the same diet every day of the year. I'm also a great believer in green feed every day; they get grass, plantain, clover, dandelion from Spring to Fall. They also get cubed celery every day in winter and most days in summer along with the other greens. I throw a handful of cubed celery on top of the chicks when they are huddled in a corner of the breeding cage and they soon learn to get the moisture out of it. The grit dishes are checked daily (it's the only teeth they have), cuttlebone is supplied at all times. These two items supply much needed minerals.

I place an inch or so of sawdust on the floor of my breeding cages when I first start to breed, and leave this in the cage along with the husks from the seed, and seed which falls from the dishes until I'm finished breeding. I clean off all the droppings and left over greens, wet spots, etc. by hand once a week, then stir up the remaining litter. This makes a nice cozy base for the young when they leave the nest. It also supplies a source of dried droppings which provide the birds with Vitamin B 12.

While this article has been aimed at advising newcomers to get started with stock of the more numerous Greens and Blues or Cinnamons, I have not meant in any sense to put down the breeding of the Rare varieties as I stated at the beginning I breed a few Pieds, Violets and Greywings. However, because of the difficulties involved in breeding some of these Rares, as well as a lack of available foundation stock, I believe the newcomer will be less likely to become discouraged if he starts with established colors. Proof of what established breeders can do with the Rares is that Hugh Wilson bred a Greywing that won BIS. Iola Bayes bred a Violet that won the Blue Section at the Illinois AA and Norman Beyer won BIS at the Philadelphia AA with his Pied.

It is the privilege of readers to take exception to anything I've written and all I'll say is that Anyone who lives in a glass house — shouldn't . . . ●