

# FRANK'S FEEDER

by Frank Miser

**MICE WILL EAT MORE SEED THAN YOUR BIRDS!**

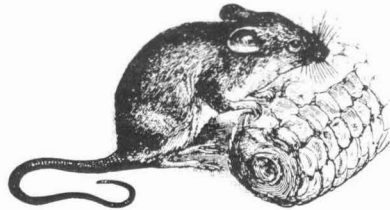
In any aviary, there will be problems with mice. However, there are ways to minimize the mouse problem and maximize seed utilization by breeding birds.

The following steps outline a workable solution to both the eradication of mice and the prevention of mice infestation.

First, clean up the yard and aviaries. All trash must be removed and thrown out. Mice nest in old seed sacks. All usable items, such as nest boxes, portable cages, sacks for nesting material, etc., must be hung up. Seed and nesting material must be stored in metal or plastic containers. If the aviaries do not have a concrete floor, small mesh wire should be installed under the dirt floor. Mice dig tunnels.

Second, if you have mice, traps and poisons are the best way to eliminate them. Baited spring traps and wind up

traps installed under boxes or 1/2" wire (so birds can not enter them) are excellent eliminators. The wind up trap is especially good in the case of large mice populations since it will trap 20 or more in one setting. A handy homemade trap can be made by placing a funnel in a seed baited box. The mouse can see and smell the seed inside and will fall through when it tries to reach the seed, but will be unable to climb back out. Be sure to provide good footing around the box and funnel for the mouse to climb on.



Poison may be used on mice, but very carefully. Mash type warfarin is recommended. It must NOT be available to birds. Bird feeders must not be available to the mice. Partially poisoned mice will urinate on the seed, thereby poisoning that seed. A poison mix can be made by dissolving a teaspoon of strychnine in a cup of water. Soak canary seed in the mixture, and let it dry. Place the poison

in a box which has its opening covered by 1/2" aviary netting.

The wind up trap and warfarin poisons should be used to continue the mouse control program.

Remember, mice carry diseases, and mice will eat more seed than your breeding birds, who are trying to reproduce and pay their way!

## SEXING OF LOVEBIRDS

Lovebirds in breeding condition can be sexed best by the pelvic bones. Hold the bird upright in your hand with both his feet clenched to one of your fingers. This way it is in a natural position and not overly excited. The male pelvis will remain in a mostly closed position, while, within a few moments, the female will relax and her pelvis will widen a little. Otherwise, in observing them, the male is usually a little smaller, a little more easily frightened, and flightier. If these rules will not work for you, set up a mating aviary. Put your birds in nest boxes, and quietly go in at night. Any box with two birds in it has a mated pair. Be sure to have lights you can turn on after you have roused them up. Leave a night light on the rest of the night ■

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