



Security for your Aviary

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An alarm system can be installed at a very nominal cost and be designed to be expanded later if desired. (This is how you probably built your aviary... small at first and expanded as needs arose). Your alarm should be simple to operate and false-alarm free.

Outside security is a real problem to any alarm company, but I will explain the good and bad of various aspects so you can be somewhat knowledgeable when you talk to your local alarm company.

Control Panel: The heart of any alarm system is the panel. When you purchase one make sure you get one that has recharging power for back-up. (It is cheaper to buy one that uses regular batteries, but who knows when the batteries are good?) Also buy a panel that has zone features. When the alarm is zoned, it will tell you the problem area or which cage is not shut when you are ready to arm the system. A siren or bell is a must... even if your alarm is monitored. Time is in the burglar's favor and you will have more loss with a silent alarm than one with a noise... many times a burglar is not aware they have tripped the alarm if silent and it may take 30 minutes or longer for the police to arrive — by which time the thief has already gone with your birds.

Quick Connect Plugs: This is the easiest and cheapest way to protect your aviary. Basically, you run a wire around the aviary and when you want to open a cage, you just unplug the wire. If a burglar forces the cage open or cuts the security wire, the alarm is activated. If the burglar cuts the cage and does not cut the security wire, he

has not violated the alarm and it will not go off. We recommend that the wire be interwoven into the cage to increase the chances that the burglar will cause the wire to be broken. Also, we usually install one wire about a foot and a half above the ground and a second one about four feet high to make sure the burglar cannot gain easy entry.

Mats: For years alarm companies installed a mat under the carpet and when a burglar stepped on it, the alarm was activated. Today, many use these mats outside only to find they give a lot of problems. The reason is that the alarm company installed "inside mats" outside and moisture or small animals walking on them cause false alarms. Make sure the alarm company installs "outside sealed pet mats." These are sealed and keep out moisture and require about 40 pounds of pressure to activate them. You can install the mats in the aviary, cover with sand or gravel (make sure you do not exceed the 40 pounds) and the aviary looks the same but you have security.

Fence Alarms: These have given problems also, but usually due to an old fence that is loose. If your fence has bushes growing on it or loose wire you will have false alarms. Another problem occurs when people install fence alarms on the regular perimeter fence. The neighborhood kids will find it and trip it everyday by hitting with a stick just to hear the siren. You will have much better security if you install a new fence around your aviary inside your present fence and install the fence alarm on the new fence. Fence alarms

work... in fact, they work so well that you can detect someone going under, over or even cutting the fence but you must have a good fence. You cannot install fence alarms on your present aviary as the birds climbing the fence will activate the alarm.

Alarm Screens: If your aviary has windows similar to a home you can have alarm screens installed. They look like regular screens but have a tiny wire imbedded every 4" plus a magnetic contact. If the screen is cut or removed, the alarm is activated. This is one of the best and most trouble-free methods to protect your aviary and also your home.

Outside-Motion Detector: This is an infra-red detector that detects anyone within a 35 x 35' area. You install this in the key areas and if someone walks within the pattern, a flood light (or siren) comes on and stays on for six to seven minutes. The theory is that when a burglar sees the light or hears the siren come on, he thinks he has been detected and runs... after six to seven minutes it goes off and he knows someone is home even if he does not see a car. If he returns, the light and/or siren will come on again.

Photo Beams: These have given problems in the past but they were usually caused by the alarm company installing beams designed for interior use on the outside. Make sure the alarm company installs beams designed for outside use. If you live in a high humidity area, you may require heaters within the beams to keep down condensation. A problem with beams is that the burglar can generally see the detection area and may go over or around the beam. You can install several at different angles to increase your security protection.

Monitoring: The most common way to monitor alarms is by a tape dialer or digital dialer. A tape dialer calls three phone numbers when the alarm goes off and gives a pre-recorded message of the alarm. The problem with the tape dialer is it may call a number and the line is busy or no one is home but the dialer does not know this. A digital dialer is superior and more reliable as it activates a computer receiver at an alarm central station and a person there calls the police and owner.

Security can be as expensive or as simple as you wish — but do something... see your local alarm dealer before the burglar sees you. ●

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