



Let's feed the birds! Sunflower feeders at Griggsville, Illinois.

To Lure A Cardinal

by Grover Brinkman
Columbia, Illinois

Bird-lovers often have grandiose ideas to help their feathered friends. This photo shows one of these attempts, a unique sunflower feeder to attract all species of birds who love these seeds.

The scene is Griggsville, Illinois, where a nature society experimented with this type of outdoor feeder, a metal disc painted to resemble a sunflower, mounted on a pointed steel rod which could be pushed into the ground. The center of the flower was a small hopper into which sunflower seed could be poured. For a time, this type of feeder could be purchased in many stores in the midwest. But for some reason it never gained universal acceptance. Today it would be hard to find one on the market. But when this hill was blanketed with these feeders, and each filled with seed, someone soon dubbed the hill "red bird heaven." That's exactly what it was. ●

A City Aviary

by Liz Andreoli
Garden Grove, California

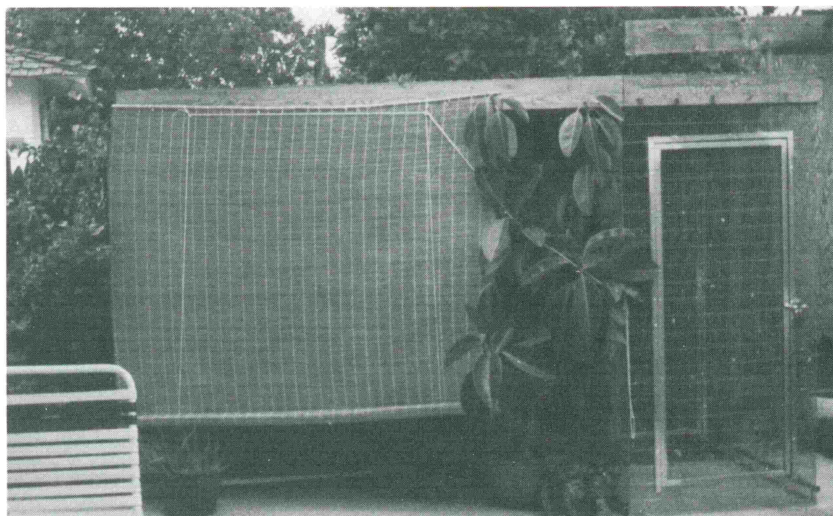
Living on a small city lot, with a total yard space that measures approximately 30' x 15', and with neighbors as close as 6' away, I am not at liberty to have a large or noisy aviary. Although I managed a small addition (3' x 10' x 6'h) on some ready and "wasteful" patio concrete, the original aviary measures only 9' x 20' x 6' h. Its basic structural materials are concrete, wood, wire, and plastic, consisting of a tiny enclosed breeding room and 3 flights (each 3' x 16' x 6' h).

When my husband drew up the plans for this aviary I told him I wanted a little of this, that and the other thing taken strictly from my reference books. I had no experience in planning an aviary so when he took over and designed it so we could see the birds from the living room I was ecstatic. Then I wanted to

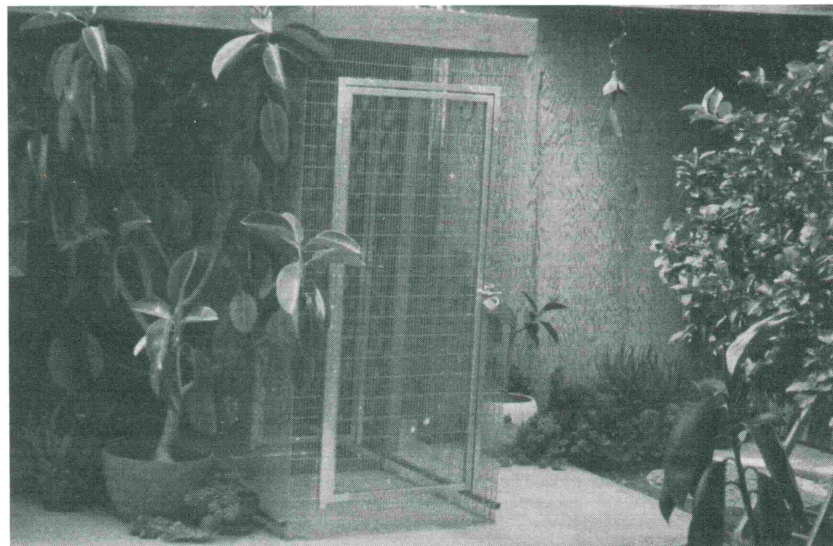
take up the whole yard with aviary flights, but again he took over and we have half aviary and half yard. In such a tiny city lot without some trees and shrubs neither the birds nor I would have been very happy. It's so much fun to watch the birds quizzically stare at a butterfly; share the ground (on opposite sides of the wire) with a wild bird; or watch a hummingbird think my colorful birds are sweet treats and try to figure a way through the wire.

If my birds must be sheltered from the elements at least they get to enjoy the sights and sounds of nature. I have seen aviaries completely closed off from this simple pleasure and it breaks my heart.

The only special features I have are a sink (with cold water only), and electricity (for warming water and a fixture for a light). A red light is kept on at all



This cockatoo flight stands alone. The roll-up shade provides shelter and a sense of security for the birds.



A safety door is essential to keep birds from escaping.



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times and is essential for the birds to see their way back to the perches if something scares them off at night. The red bulb provides subdued light and does not disturb their rest.

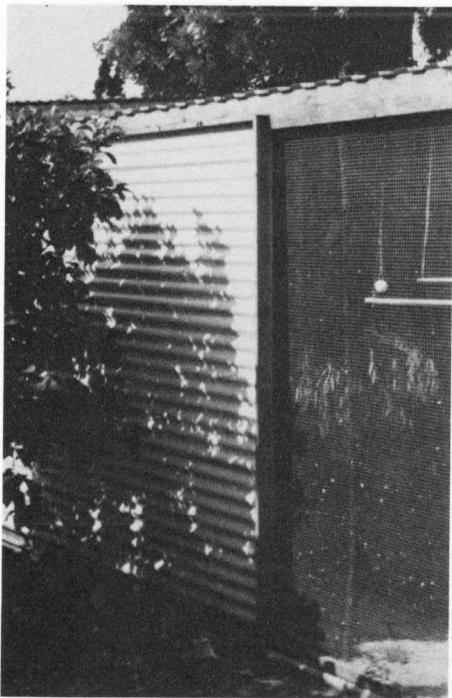
I do have two off-the-ground breeding units (3' x 6' x 3'h), attached to the last flight. We cut the door holes through the side of the existing end flight so if the birds escape during cleaning they are trapped in this connected space. Although these types of flights are much more sanitary I like the feeling of closeness to my birds with a walk-in concrete floor flight. I realize that some aviculturists use these small cages for permanent homes, but I have better luck when I use them only during the breeding cycle. When a pair is through raising its young it goes back into a 16' long mixed flight. All the birds in this flight are compatible, so I can afford this luxury to my birds even though I only have a small yard and limited space.

Not all birds will mix compatibly in the same flight, but I have combined Indian ringnecks, greycheeks, cockatiels, budgies, plumheads, and finches without worry as long as I don't over crowd them. This only works with these type of birds and my particular birds. I can't guarantee it to work for your birds or other types of birds. Birds are individuals just as humans; some have mild personalities, others are cantankerous and uncooperative. For instance, my cockatoos are not disrupted during the year, but rather I provide them with a large enough flight and leave them alone. These Goffin's are in the 3' x 10' x 6'h flight on the patio, and they seem to do well in it.

You may not think that the length of a flight pen is important, but I have seen how much strength has been gained by birds I have brought home that were housed in smaller, typical flights. Also, after watching a pair of Indian ringnecks housed in a breeding unit 3' x 6' x 3'h for six months, go wild with excitement from the freedom offered to them in the 16' flight, I know it must be pertinent to their health, emotional and/or physical.

In addition to flight space and scenery, birds need amusement during the non-breeding season. I do still buy some toys, but they rust and break so easily we've provided amusement in other cheaper ways. At one end of each flight, for example, we placed swings in a series of steps. They are very simply made with different size dowels, chain and eyelet screws. Being so simple you wouldn't think so, but they do provide

For information about contacting any of these member clubs, please call that club's closest state coordinator. There is a state coordinator listing with phone numbers elsewhere in this publication.



White plastic used to block wind and rain but still allow light in.

much amusement and exercise. In fact, swings are excellent for a bird's balance.

Perches must be placed at both ends of the flight or the length is of no importance. I brought home a pair of Indian ringnecks once that were housed in a flight 12' long, not much shorter than my flights, but they were provided with only one perch in the whole flight! Why would they even go to the opposite end? I know birds climb and I'm sure they flew to the other end and climbed a little, but by the lack of control in their flight I knew they didn't have a great impetus to do so.

We used 1/2" x 1/2" wire because it was cheaper, but now I wish we'd have used 1" x 1/2". It's not that much more expensive and I would have been able to house a little larger type of bird in it without the worry of them chewing out.

On the roof and sides of the main aviary we used corrugated plastic. It keeps out the wind and rain while still allowing for plenty of natural light to penetrate. On the off-the-ground flights we used plywood sides and roofed them with plywood and roll asphalt because at one time I had a pair of nandays housed there. If you've ever heard a nanday scream you know what I feared: an eviction petition from the neighborhood! It turned out I couldn't stand the noise, but my neighbors never said a word. For light through the plywood we used plexiglass windows. I'm sure this structure will last "forever," but it was an expensive endeavor. Shrubs, trees and vines also provide for excel-



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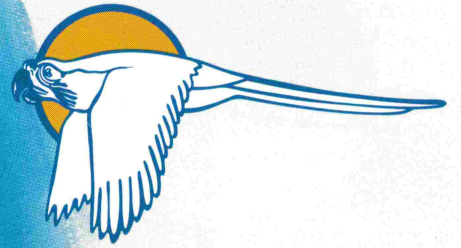
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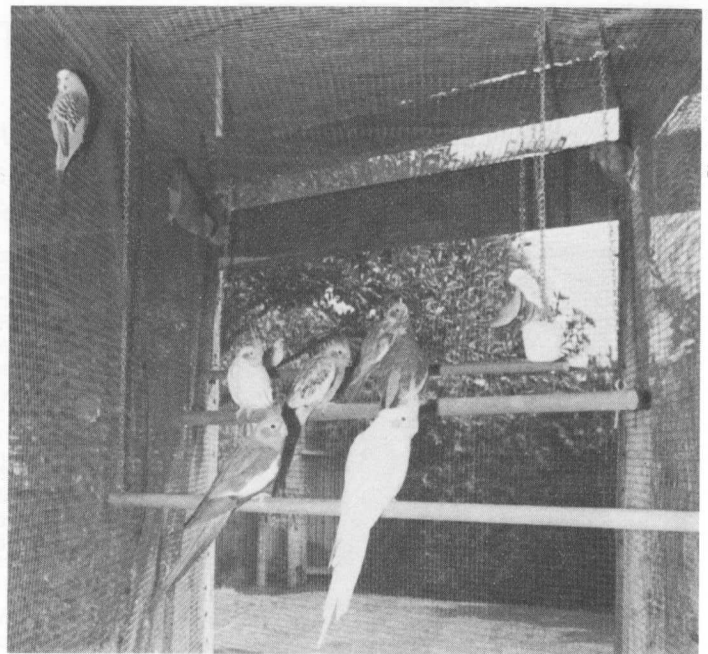
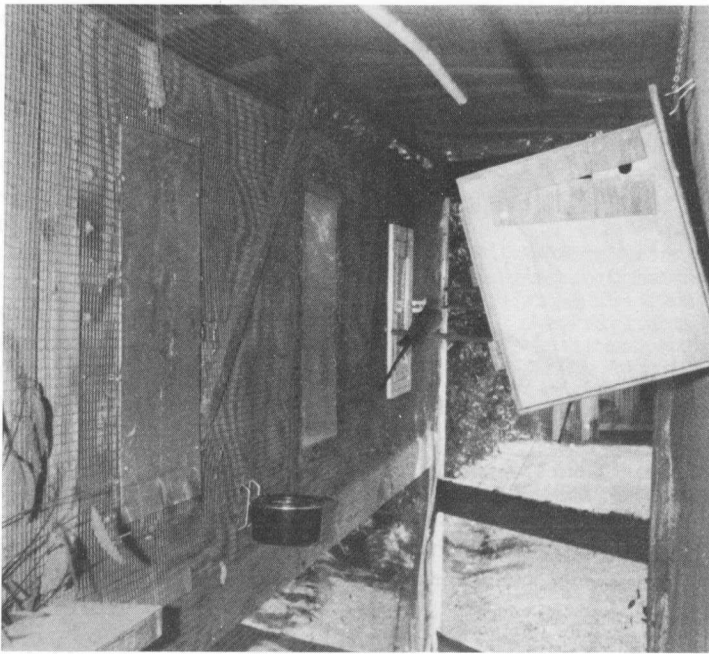
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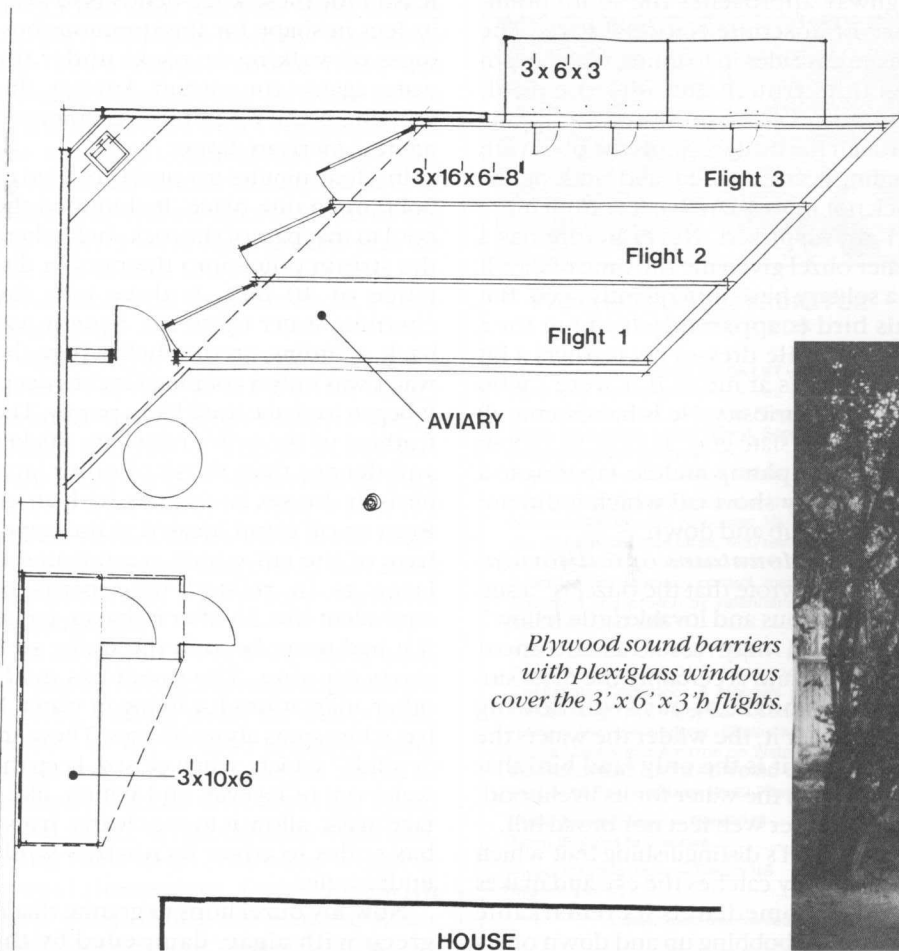
lent sound barriers. We let our neighbor's pepper tree engulf the top of the main aviary and it adds a touch of enchantment.

For the goffin's flight I wanted to try a little more natural looking protection from the elements. My husband cut and

framed some trellis wood for three sides and we planted bougainvillea hoping to block the wind and add beauty on top of beauty, so to speak. The bougainvillea hasn't completed its growing journey yet so we stapled thin sheets of clear plastic to the inside of the trellis

for wind protection in the meantime. On the side facing the traffic we attached a roll-up wooden shade backed with burlap for privacy and a feeling of security.

My aviary is six years old and so far it has worked well. All the variables, however, that make it work may change tomorrow. My neighbors are extra special people and in the city good neighbors are essential for tranquil bird keeping. Also, the climate here in Southern California is mild and the aviaries are set up accordingly. My way of management, or my dreams and desires for my birds may be different from yours but I hope that you can gain something from my experiences, in any case, and continue to love your birds. ●



Plywood sound barriers with plexiglass windows cover the 3' x 6' x 3'b flights.

