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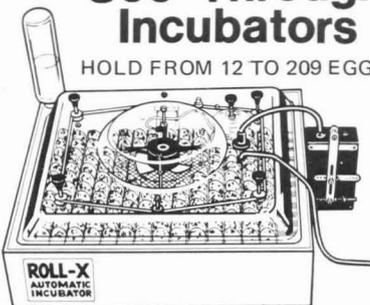
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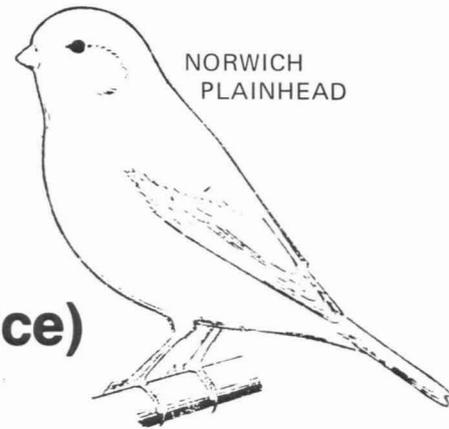
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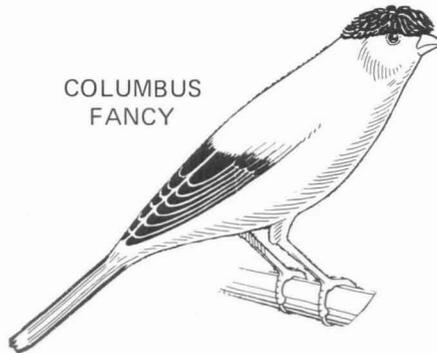
## Thoughts for the Novice

### (and the not so novice)

by Janice Pritchard  
El Cajon, CA



NORWICH  
PLAINHEAD



COLUMBUS  
FANCY

As the show season is upon us, I feel the need to talk about canaries raised for the show bench.

For the past several years, the Type birds have gotten bigger and bigger, as have the Red Factors, and non-Red Factors. There are standards set for each strain of birds. However, in a lot of shows, the standards are nearly ignored. The *biggest* bird wins. A judge has to judge some shows by the show standards, and some shows by the size of the birds that are being raised in a particular area.

Red Factor and non-Red Factor canaries should not be over 5½ inches long according to show standards. We see them as big as a Norwich, however, and they win! The Norwich Canary has been bred into all varieties of canaries, giving them nice conformation, but much too much size.

All birds should have nice rounded, heads, short beaks, short tails, and smooth even feather texture. The past few years have seen many rough feathered birds from too much buff to buff (frost to frost). By putting Norwich to birds background, and this buff to buff breeding to get size and conformation, you are also getting the tendency toward feather lumps.

I have had canaries for nearly 20 years with no feather lumps. But in the last two years, I have had feather lumps on my own birds, as have many breeders I know. About 5 years ago, I purchased 6 birds from another area, to bring new blood into my line, and without my knowledge, these

birds had Norwich in their background, and no doubt buff to buff breedings. So now the lumps are showing up and they are a chore to get rid of. I have had some success with cutting them out, but in some cases they keep coming back time after time. Those birds cannot be used for breeding again, as they will pass on their lumpy blood!

I have purchased imported Glosters, where there has been a good deal of buff to buff, making very loose feathers, and I have lumps showing up in my Glosters these past 2 years. You should always breed yellow (hard feather) to buff (frost) in every breeding that it's possible. This prevents these loose floppy feathers that cause feather lumps. The little Gloster is another bird that is suffering from too much size. They should not be over 4½ inches in length, beak to tail. You now see them on the show bench as big as regular canaries, 5½ inches.

In order to get birds back to the standards where they belong, they should *all* be judged according to standards set up for them many years ago. Standards are no good unless they are followed. The poor novice breeder doesn't know what to do. One person says "get more size"! Here is a list of the sizes according to accepted judging standards—

Gloster Fancy—not to exceed 4½ inches.

Border Fancy—not to exceed 5½ inches.

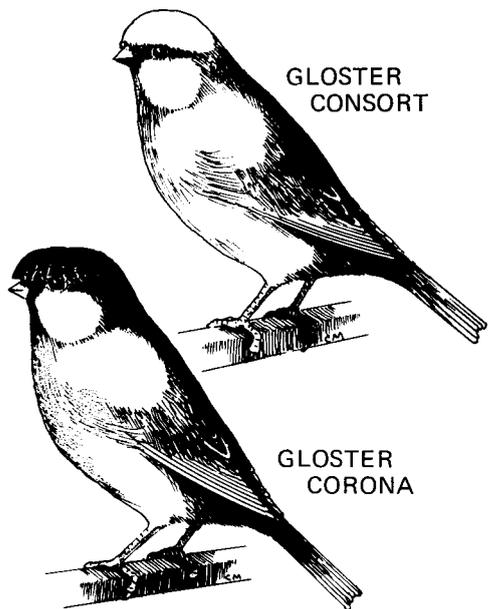
Columbus Fancy—5½ to 6 inches.

Yorkshire—to 6¼.

Norwich—may be 6 to 6½ inches.

If you look around at the shows, you will see most of these birds are way over the standards in size. Some an inch or more. Granted, the Norwich has improved many bird's conformation, but that was all it was intended to do, not make all birds as big as a Norwich, and a Norwich as big as a pigeon!

When you are breeding your birds, breed Hard Feather to Frost, or in Type birds it is called Yellow to Buff. (Doesn't matter the color of bird, hard feather is still yellow, and frost is still buff.) In the Red Factors, most dimorphic hens and males should be bred to hard-feather, but if you have a hard-feather dimorphic, she should be bred to a frost male, and most, or all of their offspring should be dimorphic hens and males. There is a bird called a check-frost, which looks, at first glance, like a hard-feather, but it has a checked pattern on its back, with tiny frosted ends in a checker-board pattern. These birds can be bred to hard-feather (if good size) or to frost. If it has too much hard-feather conformation, it should be bred to frost.



In Glosters, always breed Consort (plain-head) to Corona (crest). Yellow to buff. It is much harder to get good conformation in a hard-feather bird, than in frost. If you raise nice yellow (hard-feather) Glosters, hang on to them. You need them in your breeding program. In nearly all birds, frost has the nicest conformation. Hard-feather tend to be thinner bodied and smaller headed.

The best way to learn is to go to shows whenever you can, compare the birds, see what canaries follow the standards, see what really good canaries look like. Ask questions about anything you wish. Someone will help you. And join a bird club. There are many old time breeders who can help you get started, give you advice. Buy your birds from an established breeder, who has had fairly good winnings at the shows, consistently beating competition. (In some shows, a bird wins because he is in the right place at the right time, he may be the only bird in that class with no competition.) Be diligent and patient and you too can raise fine canaries.

# Food for Thought...



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