



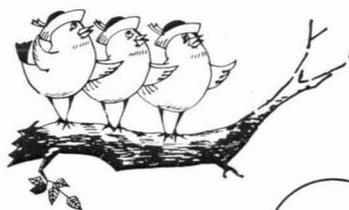
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Canary Calendar

by Charlotte Nierenberg
P.O. Box 2095
Sepulveda, CA. 91343



Charlotte Nierenberg

APRIL/MAY AIDS

A Few Words of Caution When the Chicks Leave the Nest Food and Care in the Weaning Cage Control Records

visions of every one of my birds succumbing. The one fatality was sent to the laboratory in San Gabriel for analysis, if only to discover the type of insecticide used on the lettuce.

WHEN THE CHICKS LEAVE THE NEST

A FEW WORDS OF CAUTION

I am sure that most people realize that fruits and vegetables, commercially grown and harvested, are sprayed with insecticides to assure the farmer the largest crop and monetary returns. I hope, therefore, it is common knowledge that these same vegetables must be washed thoroughly before serving to our families AND OUR BIRDS!

From the correspondence and phone calls received recently, it seems that novices usually get along fine with their first nests until the chicks are ready to leave the nest. Then, confusion starts and the questions asked are similar:

"My hen laid another clutch of eggs before the chicks left the nest. Can I remove the babies? Will the cock feed the babies in another cage? What can I do about preventing the parents from plucking the babies? What do I feed the chicks after they are weaned?"

Famous last words! Somehow, one or two leaves of the Romaine lettuce I served to no less than 85 birds (including baby Gouldians and hens feeding babies) escaped my water faucet because ten canaries were poisoned.

When breeding on a "pair-to-pair" basis, the proximity of the cock and the rich egg food intake sometimes stimulates the hen into mating and laying her second clutch earlier than if she were raising her brood alone.

The symptoms were obvious — their beaks were green with the well-loved lettuce, each was squatting on the floor of their cages, liquid exuding from their beaks — some already convulsing.

When the hen starts plucking feathers from her young or crowds into the nest before they leave (18-21 days), she will no doubt be laying her second clutch of eggs and is using the only nest available to her.

My hand was shaking as I finally reached a veterinarian by phone, and he advised a dose of milk of magnesia or molasses directly into each beak. Fortunately, I had black-strap molasses on hand and proceeded to treat each victim. By the time I reached the tenth canary, he was dead.

When the signs are obvious, move the nest of babies to the other side of the breeding cage and place a new nest where the old one was. If she will not build a new nest with fresh nesting material and

Percentage-wise, I was lucky because as I treated the affected birds, I had



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persists in using the old one, move the babies to the new nest and freshen the old one for her. Allow the cock and the young to remain in the same cage until the second egg is laid. You may then remove the young and their father to a new cage where he will continue to feed them until they learn to pick up food for themselves. He can then be returned to the hen or placed in an individual cage until the new babies are four days old.

FOOD AND CARE IN THE WEANING CAGE

Four to Six Weeks — After the chicks are able to pick up food for themselves, they should be kept on a “soft” diet for about two weeks — Condition/nestling food (Petamine), corn muffins — crumbled, moistened bird egg biscuits, gravel, cuttlebone and fresh water daily containing water-soluble vitamins. Also, one teaspoon per bird of the same egg food they have been accustomed to may be served three times a day, gradually reduced to a once-a-day serving by six weeks of age.

Six to Eight Weeks — Hard seed can be added to the above diet, plus a small amount of greens per bird daily (THOROUGHLY WASHED).

Eight to 16 Weeks — The “baby moult” usually starts between eight and ten weeks of age and first-year birds will lose and replace all feathers except the tail and flights. Red Factors should receive color food at about eight weeks of age and continue until the moulting process is over.

Although by no means completely adult, most young canaries have completed their “baby moult” by 16 weeks of age and can be considered “teenagers”. Soft egg food should gradually be reduced to a once a week offering if they are flighted in a large aviary — eliminated if in a small cage. Condition or treat seed may continue to be a steady part of their diet, especially in large flights, where they will throw off excess fat by exercise alone.

SUGGESTIONS FOR CONTROL RECORDS

For those who are just starting to breed a few pairs of canaries, a simple system of control records is recommended. An index card may be attached to each breeding cage with pertinent information noted thereon, i.e., when the

birds were set up, date and number of eggs laid, when hatching is expected, etc. These index cards may be dated and filed for future reference.

I use a more complicated and detailed system of records (notebook style) which I will be happy to explain upon request.

However, the handiest page in my notebook is my chronological list of babies AFTER THEY HAVE BEEN Banded. This enables me to keep an accurate, running record of the produce for the season and also cues me to the important milestones of their early lives — at six weeks they are ready for an adult diet, at eight weeks — color food for red factors and at 16 weeks they are reasonably mature. The columns are headed with such items as:

- Band
- Date Hatched
- Type
- Color
- Sex
- 6 Wks.
- 16 Wks.
- Remarks (Sold to/Keep)

My best wishes for “MANY HAPPY RETURNS” this breeding season! ■

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