

SILVER SONG

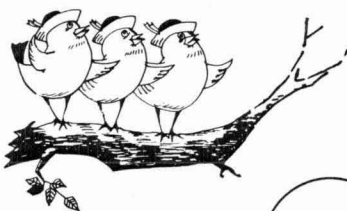


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Canary Calendar

by Charlotte Nierenberg
P.O. Box 2095
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Charlotte Nierenberg

REST & RECUPERATION

INCREASING PRODUCTION NEXT YEAR

SCHEDULE FROM HATCHING TO MOULTING

COLOR FOOD

REST & RECUPERATION

"Tapering off" operations should come as a welcome relief to both breeder and birds at this time of the year.

Breeders are tired of preparing egg food, performing necessary extra chores

and staying so close to home during the season. More important, the birds are ready for a well-earned rest!

For those who breed on a pair-to-pair basis, that is, when both the cock and hen raise their babies, the parents should be separated when the last clutch of babies is about 10-12 days old. This will preclude further coition and resultant fertile eggs. The more "eager feeder" should remain with the young (preferably the cock) and the mate removed to a nearby cage. If the hen lays another clutch of eggs after that, her infertile eggs may be tossed without regret as soon as she completes her laying cycle.

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INCREASING PRODUCTION NEXT YEAR

Understandably, a large commercial breeder wants as much produce and profit as possible during a breeding season. A basic hobbyist, however, is closer to his birds and values the individual hen who is a good breeder and mother. Since most creatures who mature quickly have comparatively short life spans, limiting the canary hen to two nests per season will ensure a longer productive life. This is especially true for a first-year hen and one who raises her babies alone.

When a novice gains more experience and sets up a number of hens at the same time, he can still increase his production from one hen while allowing her to raise only two clutches.

A hen canary is capable of laying up to four clutches of eggs per season. Laying and incubating does not drain strength — it is the feeding and nurturing the babies for approximately four weeks that does.

If the hen lays infertile eggs, she may be allowed to try until she produces. Sometimes a change of mate will help.

Any clutch of eggs (from the first to the third) may be removed and transferred or distributed to other hens who lay at the same time. The first hen may then be recycled to produce more eggs.

If the hen hatches only one or two babies, these can be transferred to another hen who produces an equally small clutch (of the same age). This hen can also be recycled to produce a hopefully larger clutch.

If the above procedures of "switching" are followed, the breeder must exercise some precautions. Try to make sure that the foster mothers are reliable feeders. Transfer babies of the same age and size (preferably close to "lights out" time) and put a drop or two of mixed dry baby cereal and water in the crop. Check the transferred babies to make sure they are being fed the next morning. Do not transfer babies to a full nest — four is an average-sized clutch; do not burden another mother hen with six unless she regularly produces and raises that amount.

SCHEDULE FROM HATCHING TO MOULTING

Hatching to approximately 3 weeks — Parents receive a regular diet plus a soft egg food mixture, condition food and a small amount of fresh, washed greens daily.

Three weeks to four weeks — Babies will leave the nest from 18-21 days. Egg food should be placed in low shallow dishes on the cage floor — also condition food to encourage the babies to pick up

food for themselves. As soon as they are seen to be eating by themselves (in about a week to ten days) they should be removed to a "weaning cage".

Four to six weeks — Parents should revert to a basic diet (no egg or rich foods until the next clutch is hatched). Babies in their weaning cage should be offered egg food and/or egg biscuits or corn muffins, condition food, gravel, cuttlebone and fresh water daily with water-soluble vitamins added. A small amount of fresh greens daily may be added gradually (a.m. preferably). Hard seed should be added when they are 5½ to 6 weeks of age.

Six to eight weeks — Babies may now be removed to a larger flight in preparation for the "baby moult" which starts anywhere from nine to eleven weeks of age. Diet is the same as the 4-6 week period. Egg food or biscuits may be gradually lessened to a once a day serving until the moulting period is over.

Eight weeks of maturity — Diet same as 6-8 weeks. Color food for red factors should commence at about nine weeks of age. Egg food or biscuits can be discontinued gradually at 16 weeks of age.

COLOR FOOD FOR RED FACTORS

Red factor canaries attain a different range of hues, depending upon their heritage and whether they are frost or non-frost birds. Do not expect the same deep red results from all canaries — even when they are nestmates. Color food will enhance the natural color and reach different degrees and shades from a light pink to an orange or a deep tomato red.

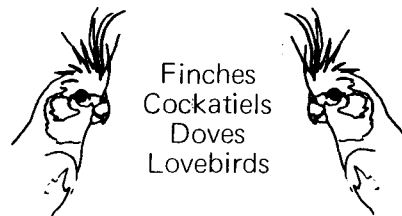
There are choices of color food today — either the "natural" carotene products or the synthetic products containing canthaxanthin. I have used both and find that the synthetic product will produce deeper shades and have not encountered any difficulty or illness from it.

Color food will not turn a yellow canary red — some unsightly splotches may appear. It is best to keep your red factors in a separate flight and offer color food either in tubes of water or mixed with corn muffins or nestling food — according to directions from the supplier.

To attain a nice, even color, it is important to start babies on color food just before the baby moult at about 8-9 weeks of age. Adult canaries usually start to moult when their breeding chores cease. They should be started on color food directly after the last clutch has been weaned.

I hope all canary breeders had a satisfactory breeding season with **MANY HAPPY RETURNS.**

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