

FRANK'S FEEDER

by Frank Miser

This Question and Answer column will appear regularly in the Watchbird. It will deal with problems of the bird breeder rather than the pet owner. Answers will come from my 22 years of experience, and that of nearly 100 other experienced specialists in the West. All answers will be honest — coming from years of work, documentation, and with regard to each questioner's situation. Answers will not always be in accord with other books and articles.

QUESTION: *What kind of a nest box should be used for Ringneck Parakeets?*

L.W., Covina, CA.

ANSWER: Each breeder of Ringnecks uses variations. Basically, the nest box is about the size of a cockatiel nest box, but 2 to 3 times deeper (18" to 24" deep). They can be hung up straight or at an angle. The bottom should have at least a 4" depth of sawdust, shavings, soil and peat moss. This mixture should be soaked with water before hanging the box.

QUESTION: *My cockatiel male will not let the female in the nest box, yet they raise babies! Why?*

R.S., Garden Grove, CA.

ANSWER: Cockatiels nest differently than Budgies. The male cockatiel sets during the day and the female takes over setting duties at night.

QUESTION: *I have been trying to improve the size of my parakeet colony with the introduction of the larger "English Budgie". The first breeding period has proved less than successful — some nice large youngsters — but not nearly the production anticipated. Is there something wrong with this combination?*

M.J.H., Costa Mesa, CA.

ANSWER: The larger "English" Budgie is not as prolific a breeder as the normal sized parakeet. There is also a possibility that your larger birds are past their breeding prime. Their productivity drops after they are 3 or 4 years old.

To get my best possible answer for your bird breeding problem, be as explicit and descriptive as possible.

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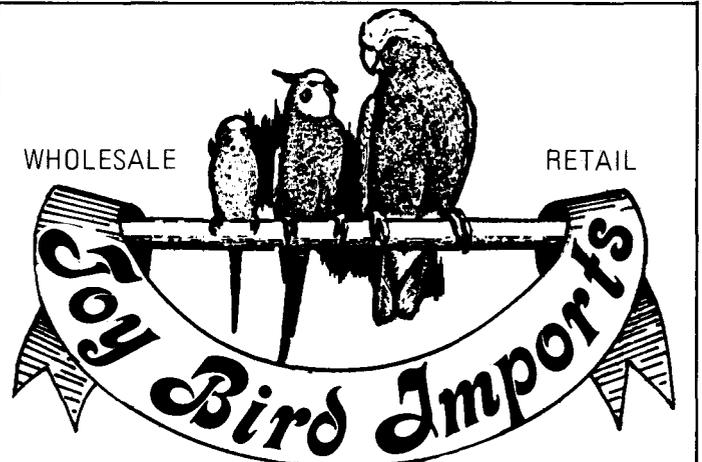
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