



Canary Sheet

The canary is a beautiful little bird with a melodic sound. It is a small bird in the finch family, native to the Canary Islands with a life span of 10 to 15 years. Canaries come in varying colors of yellow and green, though birds in captivity can be a variety of colors, such as shades of peach and orange. Canaries make a great pet

Care Sheet

They are social birds that enjoy the company of other birds, especially other canaries. However, if you can offer your canary conscientious companionship, it is not objectionable to keep a single male for his wonderful song. The song is normally used to attract a mate and shows that your bird would enjoy companionship. If the male is paired with a female, he will still sing, but of less frequency. And, of course the song of the male canary is more melodious than any other bird.

Finches and canaries should not have their wings clipped as a taming device. They rely entirely on their wings for mobility to reach feeding cups and perches. It is a traumatic experience for a canary to have his wings clipped even partially.

THE CAGE

The cage is your canary's entire world, so make it a cheerful, roomy one. The cage must be large enough to promote exercise, which is vital to good health for any bird. Always select a rectangular cage designed for horizontal flight because canaries like to fly back and forth, not up and down, remember length is always better. I recommend a cage of the following size a MINIMUM of 18"W x 18"H x 18" D, if you have the space and the money don't scrimp on the cage remember the above dimensions are my recommendations of the minimum size cage, don't be afraid to purchase something larger.

To ensure that your bird has a secure feeling, place the cage against a wall or in a corner. It is very important to keep your bird's nails trimmed because long nails can catch easily on cage wires and perches which could result in broken nails, lost toes and broken legs. Using a fingernail clipper, clip your bird's nails just in front of the vein. The vein is easily visible in a

brightly-lit area. If the birds' foot bleeds, you have cut the vein, which could be a critical situation. You must stop the blood flow immediately. Apply styptic powder, flour or corn starch to the wound. If none of these materials are available, light a match, blow it out and immediately touch the blown out match to the cut area, this may sound cruel, but it immediately cauterizes the wound. Bleeding must be stopped as a small bird can easily bleed to death in a very short time.

WHAT TO FEED YOUR BIRDS

Soaked bird seed and seedling heads provide a healthier alternative to hard dry seeds. Canaries also welcome slices of fruit such as apples, oranges, pears, bananas. Most green stuff grown in the garden are also suitable for canaries, but ensure that they have not been treated with pesticides prior to feeding them to your canaries. They should always be washed prior to feeding to your birds. The following is a listing of suitable supplemental food for canaries.

GREENS

Kale	Spinach
Turnip Tops	Broccoli
Mustard	Endive
Chicory	Watercress

VEGETABLES

Corn (raw or cooked)	Sweet Potatoes
Grated raw carrots	Cooked carrots
Peas	Cucumbers

FRUITS

Apples	Oranges
Pears	Bananas

I am a firm believer of feeding your birds a variety. Diets of strictly seed and water is inadequate for any bird. Try to provide an adequate diet consisting of the following; fresh water, seed, greens, protein supplements, minerals and grit. Offer several food items and encourage your bird to eat as many types of food as possible. Seed should consist of several types of seed mixed together to form a mixture which will balance protein, carbohydrates, oily/fatty seeds. A good mixture to seed to feed is one that consists of Canary Seed, Rape, Flax, Oat Groats, Millet, Hemp, however the quantity of the flax, and hemp, should be of lesser quantity when the birds are molting. When the birds are moulting, they can become somewhat lethargic and will get fat if fed too high of a quantity of the oily seeds. But...these same seeds are extremely important when conditioning the bird for song. All birds should be provided fresh drinking water daily, this ensures that even if the birds do soil the water, no harmful bacteria will grow in

the water. Protein can be added in the form of a softfood/eggfood mixture and providing this to all birds daily. These products are moistened to achieve a moist and crumbly, not wet texture. A crucial product that all pet birds need is Calcium. For many years calcium has been given to birds in the form of Cuttlebone, however a study of New York veterinarians found that over 90% of cage birds in the United States are deficient in calcium. A calcium supplement should be added to the softfood/eggfood mixture once a week for non-breeding birds and five times per week for breeding birds.

MOULTING

Natural moulting time for your canary is normally between July and September, during this time they will sing very little. During the moult, your bird may not feel well and will be more susceptible to drafts and temperature changes than normal. You should ensure that during this time you keep him out of drafts and keep the temperature at a constant level. Feeding during the moult should be generous with high protein items; high protein is essential for the formation of new feathers. Softfood/Eggfood should be provided during this time approximately every other day, dry seed should also be provided as well as greens, vegetables and conditioning food. Baths should be offered as often as possible during the moult as it assists in loosening the old feathers and aids in assisting the sheen and condition of the birds' new plumage. I have found that feeding cucumbers during the moult also assists the birds' health and vitality during and after the moult. You should also help your birds through the moult by feeding a molting supplement.

KEEP THE CAGE CLEAN

The cage should be cleaned frequently, as often as possible, but not less than once per week, this will prevent the build up of soiling which allows bacteria to grow and endanger your pet. There are a variety of items on the market that can be used to line the cage bottom, some of these are corn cob bedding, pine or cedar shavings, but probably the most inexpensive method is to line the bottom of the cage with newspaper. When carrying out the cleaning chores, the perches in the cage should be cleaned as well, as they can become soiled from the bird wiping their beaks on them.

This article is not intended to be all inclusive, but for the person who just buys a bird for companionship, maybe it will assist in providing information which will enable your bird to live healthy, happy and provide hours and years of enjoyment.