

# Instructions for breeding

Wednesday, 08 November 2006

Last Updated Thursday, 24 January 2008

8 weeks before breeding:

Conditioning for breeding requires changes in three independent factors: heat, light and diet.

Heat: 50 - 55 degrees Fahrenheit.

Light: 13 - 14 hours day time.

January 1: Start moving the light back for cocks, start at 7AM, move it forward 30 minutes every two weeks.

January 15: Start moving the light back for hens as the same procedure as for cocks.

When reach 1st week of 13 hours days, the birds are ready to be paired. (Around April 1st)

Use Grow light bulbs, vita light, photo cell or neon light, it must be full spectrum light.

Diet: Increasing the frequency of extra such as fruits, greens and sprouted not only provides additional essential vitamins and minerals but also parallels the natural breeding season when more food is available.

Giving sprouted seeds to breeding stocks.

Wheat germ oil that is fortified with vitamin A, D, and E is an excellent conditioner and can be added to sprouted seeds.

Use 1 teaspoon wheat germ oil to 1 quart of sprouted seed, feed no more than 1/2 teaspoon per bird (1/4 cup per 20 birds). Discontinue wheat germ oil when breeding begins. Failure to stop the wheat germ oil will prolong egg laying indefinitely.

Egg food should be offered in limited quantities, 1/2 teaspoon per bird (1/4 cup per 20 birds), once a week.

Song food or soaked hemp can be offered daily in very limited amounts.

Be sure to monitor the birds weight. Many of the extra are fattening and must be given in limited amounts or infertility can result from obesity.

4 weeks before breeding:

Treat all birds for parasites such as mites, trim the long nail, trim the vent feathers of cocks if needed.

Proteins should be increased. Feed bee pollen, soaked hemp over night in water in refrigerator.

Extra vitamin E should be given the last 3 weeks before breeding. Vitamin supplements or wheat germ oil are good sources of this vitamin.

Egg food can be offered 3 or 4 times a week, no more than 1/2 teaspoon per bird. Excess quantities of rich foods result in obesity, which can cause infertility and egg binding.

Birds should be paired only when they are ready.

Nest building is a clue as to when she is ready for the male.

If the male is singing and dancing he is ready for the female.

When hen tears paper, put her to breeding cage. Hens become restless and call to the cocks. Sometimes the hen assumes the mating position when she hears the cocks breeding song.

One or two days before the first egg and up until the last egg of the clutch is laid, the hens increase water consumption.

The cocks drop their wings and dance as they sing. Male must be with female 36 hours.

Before introducing to female, feed the male some fresh egg food and greens.

Egg food should be given once the birds are paired. The hen will probably lay within one week.

Begin to lay (4-5 days):

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The amount of egg food should be reduced.

Feed chickweed for 3 days in case of emergency thin shelled eggs.

In incubation (14 days):

No egg food, only seed, gravel, fresh water, and a little lettuce. Rape + canary seeds, small bit of dry nestling food and green in the morning.

The hens should be given a bath.

Candle the eggs at 6 or 7 days.

A day or so before the young birds are expected to hatch, give the hens a treat cup of soft food.

Hatching:

Day 1:

When the young hatched, feed them 3 times a day with egg food.  
Do not feed to much during the first few days.  
Give hen a bath.  
Give hens some sweetened, moist shredded wheat or cooked sweet potatoes or a little green.

Day 4:

Feed sprouted seeds, soaked hemp, green until they themselves can crack dry food.

Day 5 - 7:

Banding. Check the band the next day to be sure it has stay in place.

Day 8:

Increase the amount of egg food.

Day 9:

The chicks eyes are opened, green food may introduced: lettuce, chickweed, don't give when its cold.

Day 14:

Chicks have all feathers, give a little crushed rape, hemp seed. The hen will stop setting on the babies at night when they are feathered.

Day 14-21:

Hens may want to build the 2nd nest.

Day 18:

The young are fully feathered and will be coming out of nests onto the perches.  
When the young have been weaned and are eating seed, it is good practice to remove the parents -not the young- and put them into a flight for a 2 weeks period of well-deserved rest.

Day 19:

Return the male if want the 2nd nest.

Day 19-24:

Weaning time, the chicks stop being fed by their parents.  
The young should be on their own, then can be transferred to a small cage. If they cry or sit with fluffed feathers, they are not getting enough to eat, return to their mother for some more days. Feed the young with egg food, soft food, greens , peas, romaine, spinach, dandelion.  
Give them oat meal whole, wheat bread, shredded wheat, wheat flakes, cooked rice, bee pollen, soaked seed, soaked hemp, and apple.  
Give them water to bath.

Week 6:

Put the young into larger quarters.  
Young male will be trying their voices, bubbling in their throats.  
At this age, spot the singers.  
It also be the molting time for the young, still give them egg food until the molt completed.  
Canary, rape seed and green also needed.

Week 10:

Train the young with tutor or tape.