

FOODS IN GENERAL

Wednesday, 10 March 2010

The hardiness of the canary throughout his entire life depends on his well being during his first four to six weeks, especially first four weeks. If his mother is a good feeder and she has good nourishing baby food that she especially likes, the fledgling will hit the perch vigorous and strong. He should have his soft food (as much as he can eat) until he starts picking up small crumbs.

He should be given a supply of cracked or seed particles along with his baby food at that time, together with some greens. I like to grind up rapeseed as coarse as possible along with cracked or coarsely ground canary grass seed. At this same time he should be given a supply of gravel (not too coarse). It will take the grit (gravel) to grind up the hard seed particles when the food reaches his gizzard. All adult birds must have grit or small gravel at their disposal at ALL the times!

The young fledglings should have their soft baby food until at least two months of age, tapering it off to a couple of times a week all through their baby molt.

At ten weeks of age they will be going through their first (or baby) molt during which they will lose all their baby feathers except their wing and tail feathers. We call the wing feathers “flight feathers”, they won’t lose them until the second summer when they go through their first adult molt.

THE FEEDING OF GREENS:

Canaries enjoy their green food but don’t overfeed them with washed greens. There are many kinds they enjoy and that are healthy. Do not feed the white lettuce from the compact white heads! It contains very little value in the way of food and has a tendency to make their bowels loose. Many times the greens we buy in our markets are the only kinds available but the greens you get from your own garden are far superior. The large commercial lettuce or vegetable growers must spray their fields with a systemic insecticide to prevent the insects from destroying the crops. The systemic insecticide does NOT wash off. The sap that flows in the plant is highly toxic and the whole plant is impregnated, roots and all. There are many wild green plants that are good if they are subjected to visits from dogs don’t use them. Chickweed is excellent. Dandelion greens are good but they wither so readily. There is a wild lettuce (people call them weeds) that is very good and it grows everywhere. Romaine lettuce is good. Collards and the old fashioned kale, the curly leaf kale (like the seed in stores) is not good. It must be the flat smooth leaf – and that is the elite of all greens for canaries. Wild mustard, turnips and radish greens are good. The feeding mother needs greens as well as the soft food.

A breeder can keep his adult birds in excellent health by feeding four different types of hard seed with some greens of good quality. The two main staple seeds are the Canary Grass Seed and the Rapeseed. However, they should have (while in flight) some Niger Seed and Oat Groats (hulled oats) especially while they are going through their molt. It is good to give them some of the soft baby food (corn bread is great) a couple of times a week also. The oat groats can be fed 365 days a year. Some fanciers think it is too fattening, but don’t you believe it. I like good fat hens when spring comes. The fat ones will be your best birds. If some males get too fat at breeding time it gives them trouble making contact (during mating) but they will be the best singers.

I hear statements saying, “it is time now (or a special time) to condition your birds for the breeding season”. You should NOT have to do anything in the way of conditioning your birds for breeding! If fed the four seeds, some good greens and an occasional bit of corn bread, they will be ready to breed when the weather permits it when spring comes. If you push them into breeding season, you will not get the success you should have. One great “MUST” is that they need a large flight ALL THE YEAR except during the time they are nesting and the males are in show cages. Without the large flights and sunshine, your success will be nil!