

BREEDING QUALITY BEFORE QUANTITY

BY Bob Smith

Breeding the modern day Budgerigar has two main components'
No1 Feather-Softness of Feather & Length of Down
No2 Length & Width of Feather



In my opinion the most important of all is the length of the down the softness & width of the feather which comes from Cinnamon Hens. I believe that the Cinnamon Hen is suited for this. Now the length is the Opaline Hens which will give you good length and spot improvement.

Softness & Width= You can use good Cinnamon Hens to achieve this outcome but I am more in favour of using good Quality Cinnamon Opaline Hen. They will give good length and width and spots. I cannot have enough Cinnamon Opaline Hens in my Avery I rarely use Cinnamon Opaline Cocks as I don't think they have too much to offer.

Length of Feather= I use Opaline Hens to achieve length of Feather and large spots .The only time I use Opaline Cocks is to put to my Spangle line .The Opaline Cock must have big spots on the back of his neck as this improves the spots on the Spangle in my opinion and I also use Yellow Face in the Spangle too as it brings out the colour in the Grey Green series bird .As you can see I don't put a lot of importance on Cinnamon Opaline cocks and Opaline cocks.

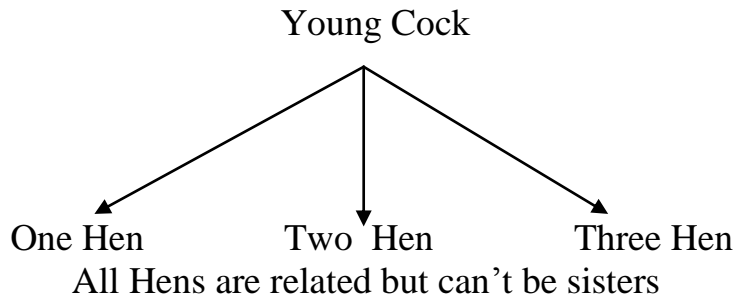
Down= To me this is the most important part of the feather. In Northern NSW & above we cannot grow thick down. but over the last 5 yrs I have got the down to grow a lot longer The longer you can get the down to grow the thicker the shaft is on the down which pushes the feather outwards and gives the appearance that the bird is bigger than what it is .I have achieved longer down on my birds my using Cinnamon Opaline Hens.

Recently I spoke to a English Judge who told me that our birds were big enough in length but we had to improve the width of the feathers.

Length of Birds= To achieve this I use good quality Normals which have improved the length of my birds .To get good Normals I have only kept the very best when sorting my birds for sale .Normals are becoming a very rare variety in our hobby.

Pairing up =When I pair up I do not look at any pedigrees until all the birds are paired up .I never ever pair father- daughter , mother – son, brother –sister. If I find after checking pedigree that they are of the above I will change them .I always pair up by sight, the looser the feather the better .I will be concentrating on getting more width of the feather which should give me more down coverage .My best pairing is an Normal split

Cinnamon Opaline Cock to a Normal Cinnamon Opaline Hen .I think in Australia we make a mistake by pairing a super cock to only one Hen per season ,I think you are far better to put him over two or three Hens in a season .I personally use five or six good cocks over fifteen or sixteen quality Hens , the way I do this is illustrated below.



Offspring

Then only the very best of half brother and half sisters are then cross mated together .

Out of this mating then the three best cocks are put back to their Grandmothers and the three best Hens are then put back to their Grandfather and this is when you start producing a lot better quality of birds. You need a bit of luck for this to work, that is why if you can have five or six pairs going at the same time you can increase the odds in your favour.

I put a lot more emphasis on good Hens rather than good cocks .The cock gives good size and the Hen gives good spots, quality of feather and style of the birds.

Now that you have bred good babies you need a good diet for them to progress to be good adults .In Australia we feed nearly 95% Vegetable protein where as we should be feeding especially in the breeding season 60% Animal protein and 40% Vegetable protein .To grow good feather on our birds you have to feed the feather with Animal protein .My feeding program is as followed.

Feeding Program

Budgie Mix = 50% Canary

15% Jap

15% White French

10% Panorama

10% Red Panican

Soaked Seed Mix= Numbat Oats

Ordinary Oats

Wheat

Grey Stripe Sunflower

Soft Food Mix= Carrots Celery Beetroot & Corn

Done in the food Processor then add Corn
Scrambled Eggs & Chicken Mix

Health Food Products=

WHEATGERM UNSTABILIZED 500G

LINSEED MEAL 500G

SIX GRAIN PORRIDGE 1KG

L.S.A=LINSEED SUNFLOWER AND ALMOND MEALS 1KG

TRITICALE ROLLED 1KG

WEET-BIX 8

F.G.ROBERTS= GLUTEN FREE SOY COMPOUND 250g

ADD 1 TEASPOON OF SALT TO MIXTURE

BLENDED MIX

I TAKE 500g of SIX GRAIN PORRIDGE

500g of L.S.A=LINSEED SUNFLOWER AND ALMOND MEALS

500g of TRITICALE ROLLED

PUT INTO A BLENDER TO ROUGHLY COMBINE

THEN ADD to the REST of THE MIX

Water Additives=

Vitamin B12

Cal civet

Solvite -D Breeders

Cook Chicken=2kg Chicken Pieces boiled up with a teaspoon of salt for 25 minutes ,When cold take chicken off the bone and process in a blender with 5% Breadcrumbs till a fine mix then freeze it.

Water gets changed every day I put Vitamin B12 twice a week

Solvite -D Breeders once a week

Cal civet once a month

Morning Feed= Consists of soaked seed and Cod liver Oil and Wheat Germ Oil mix with a sprinkle of the health food products & a piece of corn

Afternoon Feed= Consists of soaked seed mix sprinkled with a tablespoon of the chicken, mixed together then a tablespoon of the veggie mix put beside it on the plate I put some scrambled Egg on the same plate.[**I only leave the soft food for 2 hours**]

SHOW PREPARATION

I start training my birds for the show's as soon as they leave the nest .When I see potential in a young bird I put it into a training cage with no front on it for about 5 minutes a day and every third day the front goes back onto the cage so the bird gets used to the enclosed cage . In about a month or two I can leave the bird in the cage with no front on it and it will sit there quiet happily for as long as I want it too.

Three months before the show season starts I cut half an inch off one tail feather and after a week I will pull that tail feather out by twisting it and when it starts to grow back I then do the other one .

Four weeks before the show all spots are removed so they will have perfect spots on the day. I also start spraying the birds with water every second day and leave the birds out in the sun to dry .Two days before the show I set up four containers. One with lukewarm water just too wet them. Second container has baby shampoo and I use a shaving brush and tooth brush to wash them. Third is clean warm water to rinse them. Forth has glycerine dissolved on boiling water with cold water to make lukewarm to rinse the birds. They are put outside in the sun to half dry then finish drying with a hairdryer as this fluffs the feathers up. The day before the show any white face birds get some Johnsons baby powder sprinkled on their head. The same day the excess spots are pulled out and I get Baby Oil on the end of a finger and touch up the remaining spots .If you make a mistake when pulling out spots and you only have a shadow spot underneath only touch this spot with baby oil, it will bring it up the same as the others. Then I get a small amount of Baby Oil between my fingers and apply it to the tail feathers and flight feathers and sere and the feet .If the bird requires it's tail to be straightened I dunk the tail in boiling water before applying the Oil. Now the bird is ready to show.

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