

The song of the Canary

The songs of the canary has always enchanted any humans within earshot. From the Canary Islands, they came to the Spanish mainland where monks bred them and sold them for high prices - all over Europe. The original wild form of the domestic canary, the canary serin, is still widespread on the Canary Islands, the Azores and Madeira. But the true maestro of song is the male of the species. They use it to mark out their territory, court the female and to egg on their chosen one with the nest building. That's why cocks sing more often when they're living together with a female or know there's one nearby (in another cage). Female canaries sing less often, so they don't get the practice.

LIVING WITH CANARIES

Canaries are no loners in the wild. Therefore it's nicer for the birds to be kept in pairs. If you already have one bird, put the newcomer in its own cage at first, next to the other one, so that they can get used to each other. A sure sign that the birds have struck up a friendship is when they exchange food grains through the cage bars. Bear in mind

CANARY CHECKLIST

CAGE: a roomy cage is the basic prerequisite for the well-being of your bird. Furnishings should in any event consist of a perch, a bath, two feeding bowls, a water dispenser and possibly fresh twigs and branches.

FOOD: basic foods for canaries are grain and seeds. They like herbage and fruit in addition but not from the fridge. Fixed feeding times make sense.

CARE: light and cleanliness are important to canaries. So the cage should stand in a bright place free of draughts. Food bowls, baths and water dispensers must be cleaned every day. The canary maintains its clean plumage by bathing daily - that keeps it healthy.



when pairing, it is better to separate male and female during winter. This is because the heating and electric light can cause females to become seasonally disorientated and to want to brood in winter. But that means stress for the hens - they need their winter break. The best time to get two hens accustomed to each other is during the winter, i.e. outside the breeding season. In some case, two cocks can get on well with each other but... come the spring and territorial fighting drives a wedge between the male friends. That's when things can lead to mutual injuries. Canaries need free flight for their well-being. You should offer them this for at least one hour daily to keep them fit and prevent them becoming bored. Very important: secure windows and doors with fly screens. All potential hazards should be cleared from this room: large vases and other objects the canaries could fall into. Hot lamps, poisonous plants, large glass surfaces, chinks and crevices.

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