

## The Cage

### *Information for the Pet Bird Owner*

We recommend a cage to house your pet bird. This gives your bird a safe place to retire to and allows the bird to be confined when you are not around. The cage should be as large as is possible. Its minimum size should be two to three times the wing span of your pet in depth and width. It should be two times as tall as your bird.

Both the cage and the objects in it should be easily cleaned and disinfected. You can use a dilute bleach solution (1-2 tablespoons of bleach to a gallon of water) as a disinfectant. There are other disinfectants available that may be less caustic. After cleaning and disinfecting, both the cage and the objects should be allowed to air dry thoroughly.

Newspaper makes the most economical flooring to the cage and can be replaced easily and often. This frequent changing minimizes the amount of contamination that can build up.

A variety of perches should be available to your pet. They should vary in diameter and consistency (use both hard and soft woods). Some birds will excessively chew at softwood perches and these should not be used for these pets. Do not use perches with sandpaper on them, they only cause foot ulcers and really have no effect on keeping the nails short.

A wide assortment of different kinds of safe toys that are easily cleaned are the best. To prevent boredom, place only a few toys in with the pet at a time. Rotate new toys for the old toys on a weekly basis. This will provide a continuing new experience for your bird. Disinfect the toys that are not being currently used.

For a 'healthy' bird, normal room temperature works well. However for a sick bird, a room temperature of 85 - 90<sup>o</sup> Fahrenheit is probably best. Drafts are not good for a sick bird. Birds respond less to the actual temperature (within limits) and more to changes in the temperature. Therefore, keep the temperature constant and eliminate drafts.

#### **IMPORTANT POINTS**

- Keep the cage clean and odor free.**
- Regularly use a disinfectant to prevent buildup of contaminants.**
- Rotate a variety of toys weekly to maximize enjoyment by your bird.**
- The bigger the cage, the better.**



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