



# BUDGIES

Budgerigars or “budgies” as they are commonly known are friendly, cheerful birds that are suitable for both young and old, and for homes where space is at a premium. Young birds have a series of bars on the feathering across the top of the head that continues down to the beak. This is a sign that the bird is young, as when budgies reach 8-12 weeks the bars disappear until eventually the top of the head is completely clear. It is impossible to guarantee the sex of a budgie at this age as the *cere* (the skin above the beak) is the same for both sexes. After three months, the cere will turn blue for a male (cock) and brown for a female (hen).

## **CAGES**

Pet City stocks a large variety of cages. You should purchase the largest you can afford. Horizontal bars enable the bird to exercise by climbing around the cage.

## **ACCLIMATISATION**

Before letting your budgie out of the box, position the cage in a quiet room. Don't place near a window. Scatter a small amount of seed on the floor so that the budgie can eat while he is finding the seed dishes. Food and water should be provided. Open one end of the box and let your budgie walk into its cage. Drape a cloth around three sides and top of the cage. Leave the bird alone on its first day. As it gains confidence it will explore its surroundings. We suggest for the first three days that you add Sulphadim or something with a Sulphadimidine base to your budgie's water. Sulphadim helps relieve stress and prevent diarrhoea and enteritis. Sulphadim should be given once a week, every week.

Budgies require worming every three months. Worming is essential as many birds perish because their feathers hide the fact they are losing condition. Budgies should be sprayed weekly with a mite and lice spray. Mites cause bird discomfort, causing them to scratch, and in some cases they lose feathers.

## **FEEDING**

Pet City provides a premium budgie mixture. Always keep your bird on a similar mixture to what it ate in the pet shop. Check seed dishes daily. Empty husks often give the appearance of whole

seeds, and should be removed. Essential to your budgie's health is good quality bird grit. This enables the bird to grind up seed after it has been swallowed. Cuttlefish and mineral blocks provide calcium, minerals and trace elements dietary supplements. Millet sprays can be given as a tasty treat, but not too often as they are very fattening. Honey bells and seed bars are also well received. Vitamin supplements are also recommended. Green foods such as apple, spinach etc. can be given, but it should be well washed to remove any insecticides. Excessive green foods, mouldy seed or contaminated food cause diarrhoea.

## **ACCESSORIES**

Toys should be introduced gradually once the bird is adjusted to its home. A mirror, then maybe a ladder, then others as the bird shows interest. However, another budgie is the best way to keep your bird entertained. Budgies are gregarious by nature, and love company. We recommend the use of sand sheets and perch covers. These help keep your bird's nails at the correct length. Seed catchers are helpful in preventing seed from falling on the floor.

## **GENERAL CARE**

All birds need moisture to help their feathers to grow straight and strong. Disorders can occur from feathers becoming dry. Spray the bird with a suitable mist spray early in the morning. Some budgies prefer a bath. Cover up the cage at night if the room becomes cold. This protects your pet from catching a chill.

## **Things you might need:**

- **Seed Catcher**
- **Toys**
- **Cuttlefish**
- **Iodine Bell/Food Treats**
- **Wormer/Mite & Lice Spray/ Sulpha**
- **Perch Covers & Grit Sheets**
- **Vitamin Supplements**

*This leaflet is just a basic guide. To find out more about your pet, ask Pet City about suitable books.*

