

Finch Care

FACT SHEET

Getting Your Bird Home

Birds travel better in cardboard boxes or cages that provide good ventilation, but restrict visual stress. While travelling in the car, try to place the bird in a position out of direct sunlight, and away from noisy car speakers, which may cause stress.

Most finches weigh less than 30 grams. Many less than 20 grams. Some 7 grams or less!!

When you arrive home ensure that your cage has been thoroughly cleaned with an avian safe disinfectant. Once the cage is set up, place the bird inside and leave him or her to acclimatise to the new surroundings. At night cover the cage with a sheet or cage cover, to prevent drafts and reduce visual stress.

Compatibility

Finches are sociable birds and are happier kept in pairs or groups. In an aviary situation a finch that doesn't have a mate will always be on the lookout for a partner and can disrupt the other bonded pairs. Compatibility varies from species to species and from bird to bird. It is recommended that you always keep a watch on the birds in your aviary, especially when introducing new birds or at breeding time. Care needs to be taken not to overcrowd, as this can cause competition for perch space and food, which may result in fighting and stress amongst your finches.

Finches can also be housed with Canaries, Diamond Doves and Neophemas.

Diet & Water

Finches are predominantly seed eaters. Their captive diet should include a good quality seed mix which consists of French white millet, Japanese millet, Canary and Pannicum seed. Finches will eat the equivalent of one third of their own body weight daily. Nutrients are used up rapidly within their bodies and they can easily starve to death if not provided with daily feeds, so it is very important to ensure



that they have a constant supply of food.

Most finches can live up to 15 years, but unfortunately if only supplied with a seed and water diet it will reduce their life expectancy. Seed alone is not a complete diet for finches, it lacks many important vitamins and essential minerals. The key to maintaining longevity in your finches is to supply them with a varied diet that meets their nutritional requirements.

Fresh fruits and vegetables such as spinach, corn, broccoli, apple etc. should be chopped up into small pieces and provided daily. Never feed any bird avocado or lettuce. If you can't provide your birds with their daily vegetables, then a vitamin supplement should be added to their drinking water 2 – 3 times a week. Cuttlebone and iodine bells should also be made available.

Wild finches consume a lot of insect matter. Mealworms are a good source of protein; mealworms will be eaten whole.

Health and Quarantine

Kellyville Pets tries it's best to provide customers with healthy, quality pets, but we recommend that any new bird whether purchased from a pet store or obtained by any other means, be quarantined for a period of no less than 30 days in a dedicated hospital/quarantine cage, which is isolated from all other pet birds. As prevention is always easier than cure, your bird should be sprayed with an insecticide every six weeks to kill and prevent mite and lice infestations. Worms can be fatal so treatment and prevention are a must. The use of a broad-spectrum



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wormer will kill any worms present, and must be repeated every three months.

If any bird appears unwell during its quarantine period, please seek veterinary advice.

Once the quarantine period is over, you can release your princess parrot into your aviary, but remember to always release birds into a new environment in the morning. By doing this your new bird will have time to find food and water sources, make friends and settle into a safe roosting (sleeping) position in the afternoon, ultimately resulting in less stress and a smoother transition.



Housing and Breeding

Just because finches are tiny little birds doesn't mean they only need a tiny living space. Finches are very active by nature and enjoy flying around, so as much space as possible should be provided for them.

Cleanliness is the best preventative measure against disease within the aviary. Food and water dishes and perches should be kept clean by washing them with a bird-safe disinfectant. Some finch species are happy to sleep on a perch, while others build themselves nests to sleep in. Nests should be provided for species such as Zebras, Stars and Mannikins to roost in of a night.

In the wild finches are preyed upon by carnivorous birds such as raptors and other animals like snakes and rats. In order to survive, finches have evolved to be very aware of what is happening in their environment and they are always on the lookout for anything that may

pose a threat to them or their flock mates. This natural instinct makes finches easily stressed and startled in a noisy, active environments and therefore it is generally recommended that as a group, finches are more ideally suited to life in an aviary.

All birds enjoy the addition of plants and shrubbery to their cage or aviary. Finches especially feel safer if they have a bushy area that they can hide in when feeling stressed. As a general rule any Australian native plant is safe for use in an aviary, with finches especially enjoying the addition of long grasses which they can use for nest building.

Varieties

There are 4 major Families of finches. Australian finches belong to the family Estrildidae. There are 18 species of Australian finches recognised and described. These are the Beautiful Firetail Finch, Black throated Finch, Blue faced Parrot Finch, Chestnut breasted Finch, Crimson Finch, Diamond Firetail Finch, Double bar Finch, Gouldian Finch, Long tailed Finch, Masked Finch, Painted Finch, Pictorella Finch, Plum headed Finch, Red browed Finch, Red eared Firetail Finch, Star Finch, Yellow rumped Finch, Zebra Finch.

Australian finches are not renowned for their singing abilities but are colourful, entertaining birds suitable for a aviary. Some species make ideal beginners birds such as Zebra finches while some of the rarer species are only for the experienced specialist breeders.

Further information on diet, hygiene, worming, vitamins, bird stress, licensing, Avian Vets and much more is available from the team at Kellyville Pets



**Learn more
from the team
at Kellyville Pets**

At Kellyville Pets, we encourage responsible pet ownership.

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