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SMALL PASSARINES (CANARIES AND FINCHES)

CAGE

The cage should be large enough for the bird to have room to fly. Canaries and finches prefer cages that are long rather than high. We recommend purchasing the largest cage that you have space for and can that you can afford. Varying the perch size and material will help keep their feet healthy, however, make sure that they cannot catch their toes in the perch material and that fibers cannot get tangled on their legs/toes. Keeping canaries and finches separately will prevent breeding, excessive egg laying and fighting. Sometimes, lesser aggressive birds will experience subtle stress from being in the same territory as a more aggressive bird and that can lead to medical problems. Because these species tend to be more timid, plastic/fabric vines or grasses can be used to create hiding areas. You must ensure that the birds do not ingest the material or try to create a nest in them. Newspaper is an ideal substrate for the bottom of the cage. You do not need a grate in the cage bottom, they make cleaning more difficult and some birds like to eat seeds that drop onto the cage floor. Toys and other enrichment activities may be placed in the cage, but be sure that the bird is still able to fly/move around the cage easily and that they are the appropriate size for your bird.

DIET

Most finches and canaries purchased will be maintained on a seed mix diet. This is not ideal because they lack the vitamins and minerals that they need. Though they may need some seed in their diets, canaries and finches can be converted to a complete pelleted diet to keep them healthy. Finches seem to prefer a mashed version of the pellets mixed with seeds (www.harrisonsbirdfoods.com). Canaries readily eat the "Super Fine" sized pellets from Harrison's and can be fed that as the majority of the diet with daily greens and seed as an occasional supplement. The remaining diet should consist of dark leafy greens, broccoli, mashed or shredded sweet potato, carrots and other vegetables. If using millet sprays as treats in the diet, please cut them into ½ inch pieces and feed in limited amounts. Avoid the large honey treat sticks. Offer your small passerine fresh water daily for drinking and for bathing. You will not need a vitamin supplements in the water if they are on a healthy diet.

VETERINARY CARE

Routine veterinary care is important for these little birds because illness can cause death very quickly. Yearly exams are recommended but more often may be needed if there are ongoing problems. Early identification of tracheal/air sac mites, respiratory infections, feather cysts, obesity, excessive egg laying and threads from toys wrapped on their legs and toes will allow intervention to prevent serious consequences. If you would like to schedule an appointment, please contact our office at 240-687-1414.

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