



## **Parakeet**

### **Traits:**

This is a smaller member of the parrot family. With its striking colors and patterns as well as its ease in taming, the parakeet has become a popular pet. If properly cared for, parakeets can live up to twenty years.

Parakeets are hardy birds who sometimes talk. Some males build up a large vocabulary and can whistle short tunes.

To tame a parakeet, you need to start young. Only a tame bird will imitate the human voice. Twilight is the best time for voice lessons. Start with two or three words and repeat them over and over. Short words with many vowels are easiest to learn.

Parakeets are social birds and prefer to be kept in a colony setting. If breeding is not desired females can be kept together without difficulty.

### **Feeding:**

A parakeet's metabolism is very active and can starve to death in as little as 24 hours if it does not eat. Parakeets should eat a staple diet of fresh fortified parakeet seed or pellet daily. Parakeets only eat off the top of what is offered, so be sure to check the food daily.

Besides a variety of seed mix or pellet, offer chopped dark green and yellow vegetables and a variety of fresh fruits in addition to a protein source like mature legumes, hard cooked chopped egg, and grated cheese. Remove fresh fruits and vegetables within 2 hours of offering to prevent spoilage. If the bird gets too much liquid from the fresh fruits



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and vegetables, the droppings could become runny. Stop the fresh food for a day to see if this is the reason. Millet Spray also makes an excellent supplement for parakeets.

Parakeets require fresh water each day. Wash and rinse their water cup out thoroughly prior to adding fresh water to reduce bacteria growth. Powdered vitamins can be lightly sprinkled on the fresh food, but putting it in the water can encourage bacterial growth.

### **Housing:**

When choosing a cage for your parakeet, remember length is more beneficial to the bird than height. Ideally the cage for a parakeet should measure a minimum of 14" long by 16" high and 17" wide.

Perches are an essential part of the cage and should be chosen to suit the feet of the parakeet. Approximately 3" of perch space per bird is best. A variety of perch sizes, shapes, and diameters will help exercise the bird's feet and toes. Place perches strategically to prevent droppings from contaminating water and food dishes and to prevent the tail from hanging in dishes or on the floor.

Toys, such as bells and mirrors, in the parakeet's cage will keep your bird entertained. Always have a cuttlebone to supply your parakeet with calcium and prevent beak overgrowth.

To aid the bird in keeping itself clean, we recommend placing a suitable size birdbath in the cage on a weekly basis. Place your parakeet's cage at eye-level in a bright area free from drafts and direct sunlight.

**Other notes:** Keep you bird away from drafts and direct sunlight as this can cause illness. Due not use pesticides that contain pyrethrins as it can be fatal to your animal.