



About Parakeets:

Parakeets are members of the parrot family. They are native to Australia, but no longer imported. Most parakeets in the US are now raised domestically. They are affectionate and enjoy attention. With patience they can be taught to sit on your finger or shoulder, say a few words and do tricks.

Housing

Parakeets need room to exercise, so your cage should have room for your bird to flap around inside. You will want at least two perches inside to keep your keet active. Adding swings, more perches, hanging toys and mirrors will help your bird's mental health as well as physical health. Keets can be housed singly, in pairs or in groups.

- Birds like room temperature (from 60-80 degrees fahrenheit).
- It is very important to keep your cage out of drafts.
- Also keep the cage out of direct sunlight so your bird doesn't overheat.
- Do NOT place your cage in the kitchen! Birds are very susceptible to toxic fumes. The fumes from an overheated Teflon pan, iron, or skillet can kill a bird in minutes
- Avoid housing your bird in utility areas as well: paint fumes, turpentine, hairspray, perfume, nail polish and remover and even cigarette smoke can all be lethal for a bird.
- DO place your cage in an area where there is family activity. Give your bird a couple of days to get acclimated before trying to handle it. Talk in a soothing voice so your pet gets used to your presence. During the first few nights cover the cage in the early evening.

Nutrition

Birds have a high metabolism. Even though they spend a lot of time just sitting on a perch—their internal engines are constantly racing so they are capable of taking flight instantly. Because of this they need lots of calories packed into their food. A good commercial quality parakeet mix should be the basis of your bird's diet. You can supplement with millet spray, honey sticks, dry greens, or commercial parakeet treats (these are especially helpful if you are training your bird). Some fresh fruit is also ok in small portions. Give your bird fresh food every day, first dumping out the shells. (Don't be fooled by a full dish—often your bird has eaten the food and just the shells remain). Fresh water in a dish is also a daily must.

A teaspoon of Grit (parakeet gravel) should be sprinkled on the floor of the cage or put in a separate dish from the food. The gravel goes into the birds gizzard and helps him digest all the other food.

A cuttlebone should also be attached to the side of the cage and changed every couple of months. This will keep your bird's beak in top form and provide calcium.

Taming and Training

You will want to think about trimming your bird's wings. Trimming is painless for the bird but renders him unable to fly for two months until the feathers grow back. With wings clipped you can open the cage door and allow the bird to climb around the outside of its cage. Once a bird learns it can't fly it will stay close to the cage and be much easier to train.

Training should be done in several short periods (10 minutes) throughout the day. Work with a reward system and very soon your bird will be riding on your finger or shoulder and enjoying your company.

For any advice or health related concerns consult your veterinarian.