

# INFORMATION

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## Short Guide to Keeping **COCKATIELS**

The cockatiel is a small member of the parrot family, midway in size between a budgerigar and larger parrots. Cockatiels are intelligent and their gentle nature makes them ideal pets. The average lifespan of a cockatiel is 12 to 15 years. It is not unusual for a cockatiel to live to 20 years of age.

### FEEDING:-

Cockatiels mainly eat seeds but they need minerals, fruit and vegetables in constant supply as a supplement. Give your bird a good-quality cockatiel seed mix (not parrot mix) readily available at the garden centre. Cockatiels love sunflower seeds, however these are extremely fattening. Do not offer lettuce and always wash fruit or vegetables before feeding. Try the following:



**FRUIT:** apple, grape, guava, kiwi fruit, mango, melon, nectarine, orange, peach, pear, pomegranate, plum, strawberry, tangerine, watermelon.

**VEGETABLES:** bok choy, broccoli, carrot (chopped or grated), celery, chard, peas, spinach, sweetcorn, watercress, zucchini. Favorites with cockatiels tend to be apple, egg, pasta, peas, rice, spinach, sweetcorn. A regular supply of grit will help to aid digestion in the gizzard. Cuttlefish bones are a good supply of calcium which may be deficient in their diet.

### HANDLING:-

The head should lie between the 1st and 2nd fingers of the left hand, with the back and wing restrained in the palm of the hand. **DO NOT GRIP THE BIRD TIGHTLY.** If held correctly, the bird should be unable to bite.

All livestock at All-In-One Garden Centre have a 7 day guarantee. A valid receipt is required along with a satisfactory water quality test.

### HOUSING:-

When considering a cage, obviously the bigger the size the better as your cockatiel needs room to stretch its wings and flap them. Buy the biggest cage suitable for a cockatiel that you can afford. Remember to take into account the cage fillers, e.g. perches, seed and water dishes and one or two toys. Also, do not forget the length of your cockatiel's tail - this must not drag on the cage bottom or get caught up in anything.



Sand sheets are best used and should be replaced approximately twice a week. Sheets should be scraped of droppings daily.

### TAMING:-

A cockatiel learns best if it bonds with one particular member of the family and lots of regular attention will help to make the bird more tame. Start by getting the bird used to having your hand in the cage, then nudge the birds feet until it feels confident enough to perch on your finger. When totally used to this, the bird can be let out of the cage. Toys should be introduced into the cage to help prevent boredom and feather plucking. Cockatiels can be taught to perform a variety of tricks such as ringing a bell or climbing a ladder. They can also be trained to speak, simply by repeating a word or simple phrase time and time again. The more you do this, the faster its vocabulary will grow.



### AGE & SEXING:-

Young birds have pinkish-coloured beaks. After 6 months old, the stripes on the chest become less prominent and the differences between the sexes will become obvious. The sex is determined by the underside of the tail feathers. In females, these are crossed with yellow bands.