

## LOVEBIRDS

Not only do lovebirds have a good disposition, these charming, brilliantly colored little parrots are very hardy and easy to care for. They can also provide you with a successful breeding experience. The lovebird has a high shrill call and may learn a few words. Averaging 6" in length with a large bill, lovebirds have an average life span of 15 years and can live 25-30 years. Originally from Africa and Madagascar, there are several different species of lovebirds identifiable by their colors and markings, the most common being the Peach-faced Lovebird, the Masked Lovebird, and the Fischer's Lovebird.



### Diet

Feed 1 1/2 to 2 ounces of a fortified lovebird diet daily for a single bird. Supplement with small amounts of fresh fruits and vegetables: berries, apples, grapes, pears, bananas, kiwi, spinach, endive, watercress, radish greens, parsley, dandelions, carrot tops, corn on the cob, peas, endive, and various garden herbs. Additional proteins can be offered such as nuts, try some unshelled peanuts as well as hazelnuts, walnuts, Brazil nuts, and chestnuts. Do not feed avocado as it can be toxic to birds! Lovebirds drink a lot of water, so will need fresh drinking water every day. A vitamin supplement can be added to the food or drinking water. A cuttlebone or gravel and oyster shell in a separate dish can be offered to provide calcium. Food and water dishes should be earthenware or porcelain; plastic ones will be gnawed.

### Housing

Lovebirds are very active, social birds best kept in pairs in a roomy cage. A minimum of 32 x 20 x 20 per pair of birds is recommended with about four perches, feed and water dishes and an area for a bath. Lovebirds like special resting places and will appreciate a nest box placed up high. Place the cage in a well traveled draft-free area; do not place in the kitchen as smoke, odors and fumes may be harmful to your birds. Several perches of varied diameters and textures will help keep their feet healthy. They love toys of all kinds such as seed bells, swings, ladders, mirrors, shiny objects, and wooden gnaws. Do not crowd the cage with toys; rotate frequently.

### Care

Basic cage care includes daily cleaning of the water and food dishes. Change paper bottoms daily and litter coverings every 2-3 days. Clean and disinfect the cage weekly. Wash and completely dry the perches and toys whenever they become soiled.

### Grooming

Lovebirds generally maintain their nails and beaks on their own through climbing and chewing. Most lovebirds love frequent baths or a light spray mist of lukewarm water.

### Health

Signs of illness to be aware of are if a bird sits with its eyes closed, watery eyes, lack of activity, ruffled feathers, itching, nasal discharge/sneezing, reduced appetite or if it shows any signs of weight loss (weight loss can be quick and fatal). Consult an avian veterinarian if any of these signs are noticed.

### LOVEBIRD CHECKLIST

- Lovebird Cage
- Nest box
- Cage liners or bedding
- Food and Water Dishes
- Perches
- Lovebird Diet
- Treats; Treat clips
- Toys
- Cuttle bone/Mineral block
- Birdbath or Spray
- Supplements
- Cage Cleaner
- Lovebird Book