



# The NTBS Show Budgie

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Published by  
The Nel Brothers Stud

## A Beginner's Guide to Breeding Best-in-Show

From the day most budgerigar breeders attend their first show thoughts and efforts usually focus on the million dollar question, "How do I breed a bird worthy of winning the coveted "Best-in-Show" award".

While there is no simple answer to this question, there are some guidelines for the newcomer to the hobby which will increase your chances and put you on the road to success.

The first requirement for success with budgerigars is knowledge. And, as with any profession or hobby, the knowledge and experience necessary for success is not gained overnight.

Whenever possible visit aviaries and 'pick the brains' of experienced fanciers. You will be surprised how helpful most breeders will be.

When it comes time to purchase your initial breeding stock, be patient and do the homework necessary to make a wise decision. The investment you are about to make can bring enjoyment and success, but beware, it can

can also bring you frustration and despair.

Avoid the temptation of buying every "pretty" bird you see from a variety of sources. Buying birds from too many sources increases the possibility of them being genetically incompatible. Search out a breeder who specializes in varieties you prefer, one who's birds look similar, and one who is winning on the show bench.

Having selected your mentor, visit the breeders aviary. Tell him in advance that you'd like to get started with a few pairs.

Be realistic with your budget. But most importantly, don't make the mistake of substituting quantity for quality. It's far better to start with two or three pair of quality stock than six pair of inferior quality.

Keep at the back of your mind that your success in breeding winners with the birds you select is almost as important to the seller as it is to you. If you're successful on the show bench you'll sell your excess stock, but your success will

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## January Highlight



Double Factor Spangle

On the 17 January we had our first club activity at the church hall. At this meeting there was a 30% attendance of members. Although all members were telephonically informed about this club activity, the turnout was somewhat disappointing. Nevertheless all who attended found it very informative.

Prof. Robin Barnard spoke at length about show preparation. This included all aspects from the nest and on into the birds adult life.

Robin covered the identification of future show birds, tips and tricks on preparing the show team, tips and tricks on providing the necessary show cage training, the pulling of spots, tips and

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## *A Beginner's Guide to breeding Best-in-Show*

ensure he does too.

Assuming the fancier you have selected has a reputation for success and honesty, allow him to make some suggestions on suitable pairings. While it is often possible to purchase an outstanding cock a quality breeding hen is "gold". There is a saying that you have to breed your own good hens, so be prepared to buy hens of similar bloodlines which may not be as visually pleasing as the cocks.

The cocks you select should have good size, desirable head qualities and depth of mask while the hens should have good length and mask. Avoid small spotted hens as they tend to pass this characteristic on to their offspring.

If possible, keep initially to one variety. Three pairs of Gray Greens, for example, will give you a greater chance of producing a strong team of that variety for exhibiting and breeding next year.

While it is quite acceptable to purchase a two or three year old cock which is a proven breeder, one is advised to buy current year hens whenever possible. The cocks you purchase will have longer "breeding life" than the hens which tend to be more temperamental. The fact that a hen has successfully bred in one aviary does not necessarily mean she will go to nest in another. The virgin hen should give you at least two productive seasons and is more likely to accept her new surroundings.

One exception to this rule is the outstanding hen a breeder has used successfully for a couple of

seasons and has then discarded from the breeding team. Such hens are often purchased for nominal sums because the breeder feels she has served her purpose, and if 'the price is right' there's always a chance she'll produce an outstanding youngster or two. Keep in mind that there was a specific reason the bird was retained by the breeder until its third year.

The pairing together of your new arrivals, especially temperamental hens, is not always easy. I usually pair up such birds quickly, as soon as they come into condition. This practice seems to help them acclimatise to their new surroundings faster and eliminates some of the stress factors involved in settling into a new aviary of strange birds, finding their place in the pecking order, and adjusting to new procedures and feeding.

The old adage "feed, breed and weed" now comes into play. A well balanced diet of seed, greens, grit, minerals and a high protein supplement of soft food should be fed throughout the year.

Your goal during the coming year is to produce a satisfactory number of young to form the nucleus of a 'stud' of budgerigars with emphasis on the number of hens. In order to achieve these goals avoid the temptation of overworking your birds, the hens in particular. They are not merely egg laying machines and after two nests should be rested for several months before they are put to work again.

At the end of the first year "keep the best....and cull the rest." Discard all the young cocks which have obvious faults or who, after their second molt, are not up to the quality of the cocks you originally purchased.

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### **January Highlight ...**

tricks on handling problem birds being prepared for the show bench, things to look out for, etc. etc. etc.

This was followed by a video about the World Club Show. This video covered benching, judging, the prizegiving, followed by interviews. This was followed by a question session which brought about many valuable inputs being provided by Japie Smit and others. Questions ranged from pre-show feeding, the sorting of birds, French molt, etc. etc. etc.

by John Nel

(Transcripts of this activity can be obtained at R5.00 per copy from the Editor. All money generated will be used for the purchase of trophies for the clubs mini shows.)

### *Show Cages*

In future before the judging at all major show a number of judges will walk through and check all the show cages. A note will be placed on any show cages that are not up to the B.S.S.A standard. No exhibits will however be disqualified at this time.

### *Unwanted Spots*

When removing excess spots from a budgerigar's mask, it is best to remove one feather at a time. Most accidents which result in the removing of the wrong spot are caused by inadvertently gripping that spot while pulling another. If this happens the bird is lost to the show team for at least four weeks. Removing too many feathers makes a budgerigar's face look hollow. Gently blowing into the feathers will cause them to separate and make your task easier. The standard calls for six evenly spaced, large round spots, the outer two being partially covered at the base by cheek patches.

## Budgerigar Health

### Inadquate Nutrition

The diet of your birds is important when it comes to keeping them healthy. Make sure that feed and calcium are provided, and that water is always clean. If feed is adequate then there should be no problem.

### Climatic Conditions

Great variations in temperature can often be the cause of illness. If a bird is effected by a sudden change in temperature then place it in a holding cage where the temperature is controlled. In cold weather, it is important that the birds remain dry. As the climate can vary so much across the globe, it is probably best to consult a local breeder if you experience troubles with the local climate.

### Poisoning

Poisoning, although not common, will affect the whole flock if the source is not removed promptly. Budgerigars are naturally curious, and will chew anything in reach of their cage. A toxic plant near your aviary can cause poisoning. Also beware of any food that may have gone off, or been treated with insecticide.

A poisoned bird may be twitching, and there may be frothing at the nose and mouth. If a bird has been poisoned, remove it from the aviary and place it in a heated cage. Remove any build-up around the beak and provide fresh food and water. Make sure that you find the cause of poisoning and remove it.

### Moulds

There are no real cures for a mould infection, so prevention is important. Mould infection occurs when seed is allowed to decay, and the mould spores are inhaled. Make sure any old seed husks are cleaned out of the aviary, especially in damp weather.

## NTBS Mini Show

On the 14 February we will be holding our first mini show for 1998. All members are requested to support this event. Points are awarded at the mini shows and these results are used to determine the Club Champion. Will you be the 1998 Club Champion ?

## Breeding Expectations

Pairings involving Greys and Blues.

Pairing	Expectation
Blue x Blue	100 % Blue
Blue x Grey (DF)	100% Grey(SF)
Blue x Grey (SF)	50% Grey (SF) 50% Blue
Grey (SF) x Grey (SF)	25% Grey (DF) 50% Grey (SF) 25% Blue
Grey (SF) x Grey (SF)	50% Grey (DF) 50% Grey (SF)
Grey (DF) x Grey (DF)	100% Grey (DF)

SF = A bird with a grey factor and a blue factor.  
DF = A bird with two grey factors.

by The Nel Brothers Stud

### Beginner's Guide...

Be ruthless in culling your cocks, retaining only the very best. Many exhibitors inhibit their progress for years by breeding with mediocre or "middle-of-the-road" birds. While hens appear to be able to 'mask' or 'carry' hidden desirable qualities, I have rarely seen outstanding birds bred from a poor quality cock. After your first breeding season, you should also cull all hens with obvious faults, but retain the balance to breed back to the cocks. You may wish to ask the advise of your selected mentor when it comes time to determine which birds to keep and which to sell, especially if you have not yet 'developed an eye' or feel the young are all of equal quality.

Before the second breeding season, you should return to your original source and purchase an additional one or two birds. These birds, pre-ferably cocks so they can be mated to multiple hens, should be superior in quality to your initial purchases. After the third or fourth breeding season, purchases should only be made to bring in specific features lacking in your stock. To increase the genetic compatibility you should continue to purchase from your original source.

By following this procedure year after year, the overall quality of your birds should improve steadily. It won't be long before your winning Best in Section, Best in Division and the elusive Best in Show.

by Bob Wilson

### ***The BSSA Price List***

Show Cage perches - R 1.50 per set.  
Show Cage drinkers - R 1.50 each.  
Cuttlefish holders - R 1.50 each.  
Ties - R 35.00 each.  
The 'All About .....' series - R 60.00 each.



**Chris Oberholzer**  
**Tel : (011) 693 1790**

### ***Northern Transvaal Budgerigar Society***

#### **Annual Subscriptions**

#### *Membership :*

- \* Normal - R 80.00
- \* Pensioners - R 30.00
- \* Women - R 50.00
- \* Juniors - R 40.00

New membership Entry :-R 30.00 (Once off)

**Contact Pieter v/d Linde for more information at Tel : (012) 335 6950**

### **Letters to the Editor**

Letters are printed in good faith and the Editor cannot be held responsible for opinions expressed by writers in any letter published.

#### **Request**

The editor is pleased to receive contributions in the form of letters and photographs. Items accepted will only be returned if they are accompanied by a stamped, self addressed envelope, otherwise they will be filed for possible future use.

All letters or articles must be forwarded to John Nel, P.O Box 43594, Theresa Park x2, 0155. I can be contacted at telephone (012) 542 3533.

**The Editor**

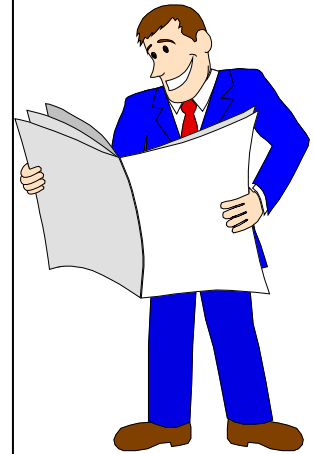
### **The Premier Budgerigar Club**

presents

### **The Young Bird Show**

**Date**  
21 February 1998  
**Venue**  
Borario  
**Inquiries**  
Chris Oberholzer  
(011) 693 1790

Place your add here  
and support the club.



Plaas jou advertensie hier  
en ondersteun die klub

### ***Articles***

Any members who would like to do an article or have articles that they have written for other magazines are requested to contact the editor so that the inclusion of these articles can be discussed. Enige lede wat 'n artikel will skryf of artikels het wat ons kan insluit word versoek om met my in verbinding te tree. John Nel at Telephone (012) 542 3533

### ***The Next Issue***

The next issue will contain the following items :

- (1) Continuation of Breeding expectations.
- (2) Continuation of Budgerigar health.
- (3) Your items.

Please contact me if you have any inputs. You must remember that your inputs are vital.

John Nel (012) 542 3533

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**Editor: Nel Brothers Stud**

#### **Telephone**

(012) 542 3533

#### **Address**

P.O Box 43594

Theresa Park x2

0155