

TO QUARANTINE...YES OR NO?

By Helen Cullen

Many, many years ago when I was very, very green I bought some Neophemas from a respected dealer: a pair of Scarlets and a pair of Turquoisines. I took them home and released them into their pre-prepared homes.

Some days later I noticed one of the Turquoisines fluffed up...no Hospital Cage back in those days. Hospital Cage, what's that? A day or two later and it was dead, back to the dealer. "These things happen" was the answer. In other words "Tough"!!! I dug deep and purchased a replacement, released it into the aviary with the remaining one. Days later the original bird was fluffed up and dead within a couple more days.

Back to the dealer for yet another replacement. I went through four pairs of replacements before any mention of quarantining newly purchased birds was even suggested to me. Consequently, my introduction to bird-keeping was a very heart-breaking and expensive experience.

A couple of weeks ago I was talking to a "bird friend" and she had lost two-thirds of the birds in her finch aviary through not quarantining a bird she had purchased to make up a pair. She has many more years experience than me, but made the mistake of omitting her usual quarantine period in her haste to pair up and start breeding.

If you need convincing that the quarantining of new birds, before introduction to your existing stock, or expanding into something new, is an absolute necessity, it is experiences like these that prove the point.

Old hand, or new, disregarding the correct procedures can have dire consequences!