

# **FEEDING SEED**

Wild birds are able to select a wide variety of food stuffs, which include dry and green seeds of unknown type and quality, live foods and various minerals all of which are not available in our aviaries unless we supply them.

## **HARD, DRY SEEDS**

Seeds are by far the most important component of a finch's diet. A seed is packed full of concentrated, easily digested material, as long as the seed is clean and fresh.

Most aviculturists around the world feed their finches a general seed mix that which comprises seeds such as millets, pannicums and canary seed plus smaller amounts of other seeds. They do this because different species of finches prefer different seeds.

It is difficult to arrive at an ideal all year round mix because the requirements of the finches change during the season. Most commercial seed mixes give a good base for the aviculturist, who can then add special seeds to their own liking. However, there may be a particular seed that a finch will pick out from the mix wasting a large amount of seed. A way of overcoming this is to provide the seeds in individual feeders so that demands can be observed and changes made. In addition, if a finch is gorging on a particular seed, this can be restricted.

Seeds can be presented to our finches either in hoppers or on flat dishes. Hoppers should be free flowing because a blockage could be a disaster. Flat dishes are liked by many finches, who naturally feed of the ground, but does present the problem of fouling of the seed.

Different seeds have different properties because of their varying composition of fats, protein and carbohydrates. So pannicums, millets and canary seed are a good general seed, but linseed, rape and niger are high in fats and suitable for colder weather.

Although some finches can survive and breed on a diet of only seed, it is not advised to try this. Your finches require a balanced and varied diet.

## **SOAKED and SPROUTED SEEDS**

Soaked and sprouted seeds have been shown to have increased levels of proteins and vitamins and a decrease in fat content when compared to dry seed.

To soak seed select fresh seed that you wash, then immerse in tepid water. Three parts of water to one part of seed by volume. After 12 hours thoroughly rinse the seed and then soak again for a further 12 hours. Drain the seed and then rinse with a dilute bleach mixture in order to kill any bacteria and rinse again. In order to sprout the seed soak for another 24 hours, and again make sure the seed is thoroughly rinsed.

Soaked and sprouted seed should not be left out because of it going stale and harbouring bacteria.

## **SEEDING HEADS**

One obvious source of seeds is the native grasses and herbs found in your area. Always be certain that the area you are collecting your seeding heads from has not been sprayed, as this could be a disaster.

Seeding heads also have two added advantages the use of the stems for nesting material and every piece will be covered with tiny insects providing extra nutrition to your birds.