



The Avicultural Society of New South Wales (ASNSW)

(Founding in 1940 as the Parrot & African Lovebird Society of Australia)

Feeding Gouldians

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Gouldians will always be a problem bird in aviaries and feeding is the main problem with these birds. In nature, instinct in birds is remarkable and they can find all the foods necessary, but in the aviary they eat only what we feed them. Food taken in by animals will be chemically separated, changed and used, and that which is surplus to requirements may be stored. Vitamins, however, cannot be produced in the animal, yet they are most important for growth, reproduction, and all metabolic functions. It follows then that a steady supply of different vitamins is a must for Gouldians at all times.

The rate of metabolic activity in the bird will vary; such as in the breeding season or in the moult. Different dietary requirements will be needed at these different times. We do not know much about birds' diets and must study wild diets if possible and feed as close to the natural as possible.

We have to know what sort of value the foods have and when to feed them. Do we feed such-and-such only in the breeding season or all the year round? This can clearly be a question of success or failure in aviculture; to feed the right foods at the right time.

Gouldians are very fond of Sorghum-Plumosum grass seeds which are eagerly taken, half-ripe grass seeds and lots of greens or sprouted seeds. From all European Gouldian breeders there has been general agreement that a very high vitamin demand by Gouldians cannot be met by seeds or greens alone. Additional vitamins have to be given in artificial form. As mentioned before, Gouldians and other birds do not store most vitamins in the bodies for long periods and cannot produce them. A good supply of vitamins should always be on hand, stored in not too large a quantity. Concentrated vitamin capsules can be used once a week and if put in well shaken soda water, the birds will drink this eagerly - they like their vitamins. In very serious cases of deficiency, more concentrated vitamins can be given according to the following dose:

80cc Soda Water
5 drops of concentrated B.V.K. (Roche)
5 drops of concentrated Protovite (Roche)
1 teaspoon Wheat Germ Vitamin E

Vitamin deficiency can cause many problems in Gouldians. One sickness is Turning Sickness (Apoplexy) which can be largely prevented. Turn sickness is when the Gouldians are nervous, hang their heads to one side, fly unsteadily, and turn their heads to 180 degrees. It is even more serious if the bird is turning around on the ground. Here Vitamin B1 can be helpful.

To assist people working on diets, I have drawn up the following chart. This shows the vitamin values of various common foods. Since there is wide variation in any numerical expression of vitamin content, due to many reasons - for example, how fresh the food is etc., I have simply shown vitamin content qualitatively as being relatively high, medium or low.

	A	B1	B2	B5	B6	B12	C	D	E	Biotin H	K1	Nicotin Acid PP
High	Blue											
Mid	Green											
Low	Orange											
Carrots	Blue		Green		Green		Orange					
Spinach	Blue	Green	Green				Blue				Green	
Lettuce	Blue		Green				Blue		Green		Green	
Greens	Green		Blue				Green				Green	
Tomatoe	Blue	Green					Green		Orange		Green	
Fruits	Blue						Green					Green
Germinated Seeds		Green	Green	Green	Blue					Green		
Egg Yolk	Blue	Blue	Green	Green		Green		Green		Green		
Wheat Germ Oil		Green							Blue			
Cod Liver Oil	Green							Green				
Yeast		Blue	Green	Green	Blue	Blue		Green		Green		Green
Milk	Green		Orange	Green			Orange	Orange	Orange			Green
White Bread			Orange	Orange								
Rose Hip				Green			Blue				Green	
Seeds				Green						Green		
Peanuts									Blue			

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