

# Lovebirds

Love Birds are attractive and loving, lovebirds make great pets. You'll never be bored around these creatures, with their chirping skills and their wonderfully bubbly personality. These pets are preferred over many others because of their small size and easy maintenance. They also tend to be healthier than other birds.

Lovebirds are little clowns, playing for hours at a time. They love to hang from toys, spin them around, and dance on your shoulder. Watch out for your buttons! They love to pull them off your shirts! They love to snuggle and preen. Many people believe lovebirds must be kept in pairs. This is simply not true. A single lovebird makes a better pet because it bonds to you rather than to another lovebird.

- **Common Name:** Lovebird
- **Scientific Name:** *Agapornis*
- **Distribution:** Africa
- **Size:** 1.9 oz
- **Life Span:** 10 – 15 years.

## Habitat

The cage should be at least twenty-four to thirty inches wide with two or more perches. The perches should be small enough to hold the bird's feet. Keep the cage clean at all times - clean it at least once a week.

## Lighting

Wild birds get their vitamin D primarily through a biochemical reaction with sunlight. When the bird preens, it puts oil from the uropygial gland on its feathers. This oil contains a vitamin D

precursor which is converted to a weak form of vitamin D3 by ultraviolet (UV) light from the sun. The bird ingests the precursor (cholecalciferol) during preening and it is converted to true vitamin D3 (1,25-dihydroxycholecalciferol) in the body. Sunlight and adequate lighting is essential for lovebirds. Lovebirds have an uropygial gland located at the base of their tail. This gland secretes oil which the bird uses to spread throughout its feathers. When exposed to sunlight, the oil turns into Vitamin D, providing your pet with a healthy dose of this essential nutrient. However, if your lovebird is not exposed to adequate lighting, he will develop a Vitamin D deficiency.

If you live in a warm, sunny region of the country, consider purchasing an outdoor bird cage or an outdoor aviary for your bird. These bird cages can be placed on a deck or slab of cement. They'll allow your bird to soak up some much-needed sunlight and fresh air. If you do not want to purchase an outdoor aviary, consider picking up some casters for your birdcage. This will allow you to attach wheels to the bottom of your cage, so you can easily roll it outside and back inside the house.

When sunlight passes through window glass and window screens they filter out most of the ultraviolet, so sunshine that passes through a window will not help our birds produce the vitamin D they need. Direct unfiltered sunlight is required.

It's hard to find information on how much sunlight a bird needs for vitamin D production, but the recommendations seem to range from 30 minutes a week to 30 minutes a day.

Use sensible precautions when giving your bird sunlight. Avoid temperatures that are too hot or too cold, and always provide a

shady spot that your bird can retreat to if it's uncomfortable. Guard against hazards like escapes, predators, and exposure to germs and dangerous objects.

It's difficult for many pet owners to give their birds enough exposure to natural sunlight to meet their vitamin D3 needs. But fortunately there are other ways to provide it.

### **Nutrition**

A recommended food is a seed mix that will say "recommended for lovebirds". To stay healthy, for every meal they need something nutritional. Give them fresh food treats three to four times a week. They love fruits and vegetables such as apples, carrots, broccoli, cabbage and spinach. Whole grain breads are okay, but avoid high fat, salt and sugar. Always get rid of any uneaten food from the cage. A cuttlebone can be provided for extra calcium.

### **Handling**

Allow the lovebird at least two weeks to adapt to its new environment. You may then offer treats but if the lovebird gets nervous, you should withdraw your hand. Talk to the bird so that it gets used to your tone of voice. Continue to offer treats until it perches on your hand. And always remember to only interact in a safe secure room with no open windows or doors.

This is only a basic care sheet,

Please continue to educate yourself on your new family member.