

Old Variety Canary: Crest-Bred

HISTORY

The crested characteristic in the canary first appeared as a mutation during the eighteenth century and was subsequently to be found in several of the breeds that were then in their formative years. As an exhibition form it achieved its greatest popularity as the Crested Norwich during mid-Victorian times.

Breeders of this variety were probably the first to appreciate characteristics in another breed that could lead to an improvement in their own from the 1870's onwards they began to make a great deal of use of the Lancashire Cobby. This produced a bird that differed in many respects from the original breed and, although it is still occasionally referred to as the Crested Norwich, nowadays it has little affinity with the present-day Norwich and should correctly be called simply the Crested Canary.

From the heyday of its popularity before the First World War the breed has been steadily losing ground and is now in the hands of relatively few fanciers.

MATING

Crest should always be paired to Crest-bred and this mating may be made either way round, i.e. Crested cock x Crest-bred hen, or Crest-bred cock x Crested hen. The expectation from this procedure is 50% of each type among the progeny. It is genetically unwise to mate two Crests together, whilst the mating of two Crest-bred only produces Crest-bred youngsters. In general yellows should be mated to buffs in the manner of all canaries but double buff mating can lead to an increase in size and in density and length of feathering.

STANDARD

The standard of perfection for the breed, as laid down by the Crested Canary Club as follows:

Size and formation of crest shall be the first consideration. A crest cannot be too large. It should consist of an abundance of broad, long and veiny feathers evenly radiated from a small centre well over eyes, beak and poll. A good crest may be flat if well filled in at the back and without splits, but a drooping or weeping crest shall have preference. Type and quality are of next in importance. The body should in shape resemble that of a bullfinch possessing substance in proportion to its length, with a broad back, nicely arched, full and well circled chest, tail short and narrow, wings not extending beyond root of tail, nor crossed at tips, but fitting closely to the body. The neck should be full and the beak short. The bird should stand well across the perch on short legs, with thighs and hocks well set back. The Crest-bred should possess a body as above described. The head should be large and round, broad at every

part, with a small beak and an abundance of long, broad feather commencing at entrance of beak, continuing over the crown and flowing well down the poll and should be well browed. In a good Crest-bred the feathers of the crown when turned over should reach the end of the beak, and the heavy brows should give the bird a sulky appearance without brushing. When two or more birds are of equal merit in crest or head properties the small bird shall take precedence, if it is of the correct type, the Club recognizing it to be more difficult to obtain, but no restriction whatever is place on the length of the bird. Quality of feather and high condition to have due weight.

Objectionable Properties - 1. Crest and Head. Crests shall not be horned at back, nor open at poll nor split at sides or front; nor shall the centre be open or long, or too near the back, back or sides; nor shall the crest be tilted, nor shall it consist of thin, scanty, hairy feather. The head of a Crest-bred shall not be narrow in any part, nor pinched over the beak, nor should it be flat or covered with short, scanty feathers, or be rough or "guttered". 2. Body: Crests and Crest-breds should not have long, thin, erect bodies with disproportionately long tails, should not be dipped in back or frilled on breast, or cross their wings at tips, or carry themselves in a curved or slovenly manner, or stand on long legs, and no show bird should possess such an amount of loose fluff or body either as to make it difficult to make out its shape.

Crested Canary Show Cage: The type of cage for the exhibition of Crested and Crest-bred Canaries is the same. It is a typical box type cage, with the exterior painted gloss black and the interior pale green. The drinker hole is 1-1/2 inches in diameter and a black hook-on type of drinker is affixed to the front. The bottom of the cage is covered wit seed for feeding purposes while at exhibitions.