BE A SPECIALIST by "Beaky"

For the guidance of the Novice fancier. It has been my experience that usually new fanciers are over anxious to fill their aviaries with birds without thought to the future, or purchasing the birds before they have the housing.

My first advice to the novice is to obtain the names and addresses of as many members as possible and visit the aviaries. Take a particular note of how they are built and the general layout. If you have only a small area available seek the help of a member in the same position. By observance many hours of wasted toil may be avoided and much of your capital saved by unnecessary material.

Once you have your aviaries completed, then decide as to which variety appeals to you most. By your rounds of various aviaries and attending the shows you should be able to select one variety: this will be your start as a budgerigar breeder.

I will explain the reasons for this statement. The usual aim of the novice is to obtain one pair of each variety to have a colourful aviary, but this is a step in the wrong direction, for, after the first season of breeding, he once again must hit the trail for further stock. As the young he has bred are all related, and to keep breeding true varieties, he has nothing to pair except by crossing varieties, or by commencing line breeding for which he has not had the experience or the knowledge.

In each variety, except self-coloured (Lutino, Albino), you have the full colour range as your selection. For example, your choice may be the cinnamonwing variety. Here you have the Light Green, Dark Green, Olive and Grey Green in the greens; Skyblue, Cobalt, Mauve, Violet and Grey in the blues. This should give any fancier plenty of scope to commence with for a pair of each colour will finally give you eight colours in the aviary.

Now step No. 2 - Select your birds with care; it is far better to commence with two good pairs than eight pairs of just birds. We all know the feeling of a novice, he is anxious to see young birds in the nest but when you visit the avairies of a member and he has no matured birds available but offers young birds to you in your quest for stock, don't refuse them, as it is only a wait of a few months for them to mature and you know you have the birds you need to start with in the coming season.

Now the reason for selecting one variety has many advantages. We used as an example the cinnamonwing variety. Now, for a start, you obtain two pairs, green and skyblue. It is a good chance that the greens will be split blue. By crossing skyblue to green in both pairs you will obtain youngsters of each colour. After the moult you can select the ones you wish to retain as future stock birds. You then have stock of your own and may, if you wish, commence to introduce further cinnamonwing stock of other colours into your aviary. By this means you will build up a stock of which you can be proud, knowing that it is true in breeding.

Another advantage to consider is the fact that, in keeping one variety, should you have the misfortune to lose a stock bird of either sex, any other bird in your aviary is a potential stock bird, as you have the confidence of knowing the breeding of each bird, but from the commencement it is necessary to keep an up-to-date record of all breeding. This can only be achieved by the ringing of every youngster and well-kept records will be of great assistance in future years.

Now we turn to the exhibiting side of the fancy. Here the specialist comes into his own for having one variety, he has a better selection to choose from and therefore has much better chance on the bench than the man with just a handful of different varieties. Also he has developed a keen eye for his birds, by not being distracted by birds of other varieties in his aviary.

In conclusion, keep this rule in mind: When you go on the trail to purchase birds, if you go out to buy one variety "DON'T"come home with something else.