

How to guide - Exhibiting Basics

Do you want to know how good your birds are? Then exhibiting them at shows is a sure way to find out.

Clubs and Societies hold shows throughout the year, and they range from Members only shows (where you have to be a member of the club) to Open Shows which as the name suggests are open to all.

The club promoting the show produces a schedule and entry form for their exhibitions and you should read them thoroughly as it's so easy to make a mistake if you don't. Within the schedule is the classification which details the classes available to enter your birds – colour, variety, sex, young bird, and adult. It is down to you to complete the entry form accurately or it is likely that your bird will be 'wrong classed' and not judged at the show.

To give your birds the best chance show preparation is key. When you show your birds you want them as complete as possible with all their flight feathers and tail feathers in place. Remember that if you need to remove a damaged flight or tail feather then it can take up to eight weeks for them to regrow. It is recommended that the birds that you intend to show are caged up rather than left in the flights which allows you to concentrate your efforts in getting your show team into peak condition whilst steadying the birds down at the same time. Put the birds on a good quality diet that include supplements, but avoid anything that can stain the feathers. You want your show team to have 'substance' without being fat.

Start spraying your birds with warm water giving them a good soaking initially. This should be done in a morning giving your birds plenty of time to dry out before roosting at night. Spray the team about three times a week gradually reducing the amount of water as you progress and cease spraying a few days before the show. By the time of your last light spray you should see that the water tends to run off the birds and the feathers have a sheen.

Just a couple of days before the show is the time to remove surplus spots with tweezers or trimming them out with scissors. If you are new to this then practice on some birds that are not in your show team as a mistake here can seriously reduce a bird's chances on show day. Once you have created the perfect mask then have a good look at the tails and flights. Any that are bent can be straightened by dipping the feather in boiling water or holding over a steaming kettle for just a couple of seconds.

Finally on show day carefully put your birds into correctly labelled, clean, undamaged show cages. Take pride in how your birds are presented – it gets you noticed.

This is just a basic guide and you may have many questions. Members of the UK Budgerigar Club have free access to our UKBC Exhibition Budgerigar Group on Facebook so ask away. It's where Budgies Come First, and if you are exhibiting your birds we hope yours do to!