

BLUE VALLEY EXOTIC ORNAMENTAL BIRD FARM

INCUBATING SUGGESTIONS

PLEASE READ CAREFULLY BEFORE INCUBATING YOUR EGGS

INCUBATOR:

Have your incubator running at least 24 hours before setting your eggs. In this 24 hours regulate the temperature to the setting recommended by the mfg. Add the water and check the temperature again and adjust if necessary

EGGS:

Let your shipment of eggs set at a 45 degree angle, at room temperature, for 7 to 12 hours before putting them in your incubator. This gives them time to "settle out" from any jars they may have received in shipping.

INCUBATION:

When you put the eggs in the incubator, do not count the day you put them in as the first day of the incubation period. Start counting with the next day. This gives the eggs time to warm up to the temperature of the incubator. We put our eggs, small end down in our cabinet incubator in the flats that have had the very top of the egg separators cut off to allow air to circulate around each egg. We also cut off the bottom of each slot the eggs set in for circulation. You can purchase plastic egg trays from our catalog to fit the cabinet incubators and ones to fit the Hova Bators. The ones for the Hova Bators come with the automatic turner. If you do not use a tray, lay the eggs on their sides on the wire racks or wire on the bottom of the incubator and manually turn 3 times a day.

CANDLING:

Candling is using an intense light to view the content of the eggs. This IS VERY important to your hatch success. Candle your eggs at 7 days of incubation. This works best in a very dark area. At this 7 day point in the incubation you will see the blood veins and a pinkish appearance. If the egg is NOT good it will be clear; no blood veins or pinkish appearance. TAKE THAT EGG OUT as it will spoil the entire hatch. These eggs can put off a gas if not removed that can kill the maturing chicks in the other eggs around them. If you are not sure about an egg, mark it and candle it again in a couple days. Candle all eggs at least once a week. Candle them again on the day you set the off. (3 days before hatch)

HUMIDITY:

All incubators need water all during the incubation period. The amount of water depends on the make and size of the incubator. Most incubators have their own trays or pans. Some have rings molded into them for water. Add water that is at room temperature as not to lower the temperature of your incubator. The last three days before hatch double the water amount. The extra humidity is needed to soften the shell for the chick to pip out. Do not use water with a high chlorine content. Start each incubation period with fresh water. If your incubator has a hygrometer, follow the mfg. instructions for controlling humidity.

HATCHING:

The last three days of incubation are very important to the hatch of your chicks. At this time double the humidity. DO NOT turn the eggs these last three days. If you have an automatic turner take the eggs out and lay them flat on the tray or bottom of the incubator or stop the turner at level position. At this point the chick is getting its beak into the air pocket to pip out and turning can cause a liquid to close the pip hole and smother the chick.

This happens more in larger eggs.

CHICKS:

CARE- The care of your chicks is important but simple. They need food, water, heat and a box or brooder.

FEED- We feed out exotic and ornamental birds chick starter. We do not recommend chicken feed. Turkey starter is good. We put the food on a paper towel on the floor of the brooder for the first few days with grated hard boiled egg on top of the food. The chicks will pick at the egg and get the feed also. Do not feed ducks medicated feed or water.

WATER- You can use the quail waterer for quail (cat # 4458). They are only 1/2 " wide and chicks can not get into the water and drown. Larger water bases can be used for larger chicks but I put colored marbles in the base. The marbles also help the chicks to start drinking by picking at the marbles. We also use "Poult Pak" (a vitamin/mineral supplement) in the water for the first few weeks. We believe the antioxidants and trace minerals found in the "Poult Pak" helps prevent slipped tendons and improves the general health of the chicks as they grow. See catalog insert page 3 for Poult Pak.

HEAT- A 125 watt heat bulb can be used for heat if a brooder is not available. Place the bulb 18" above the chicks to one end of a large box. DO NOT put the food and water directly under the bulb. The chicks will gather under the bulb if cool and get back away from it if too warm. After the first day or two we switch to a green bulb. You can paint a regular heat bulb with cermeric paint. This will put off the same amount of heat but dulls the light so the birds are more relaxed. They do not tend to pick or be so flighty.

BROODER- If you do not have a brooder a large box can be used.(the type a ref. or lawn mower comes in). Cut the box off to 18" high. Do not put the box where there is a lot of movement, such as people walking by, or noise, as chicks are very flighty. DO NOT put newspaper on the bottom of the box as it is too slick for the new chicks to stand on. They need something rough to prevent spraddle leggs. Gunny sacks will work but Drop Pan Paper Board # 1628 in our catalog is best. For larger birds leave part of the wire bottom exposed.

GROWING BIRDS:

1-4 weeks old-- This age group we feed Starter. We also provide heat for them and use Poult Pak in the water and keep the box or brooder clean. We use room temperature water.

5-8 weeks old-- This age group we change to Grower feed. We continue to have heat available if needed. You can use cooler water and always continue to keep the area clean.

9-16 weeks old-- They can be moved outdoors if shelter is provided. They need room to exercise. You can switch to finisher feed or maintenance feed after 16 weeks. We stop the Poult Pak on the smaller birds but continue on the larger long legged birds.

CONCLUSION:

This is a few of the things we have been asked by our customers and hope this may help you with your chicks. If there is something you do not understand or we did not cover, give us a call and we will try to help. Call 785-562-5258 .