

MATING INDIAN FANTAILS

When mating Indian Fantails there are a number of factors to consider. To start with you need to have a copy of the standard along with the standard pictures at your side and you need to be familiar with them. This will help you to keep the ultimate goal clear in your mind.

I find that many of my best stock birds are overdeveloped in a trait; tail too large, long muffs, oversized body, extreme amount of tail feathers, very hard feathering, etc. Remember that as with all pigeon breeds Indian Fantails are a man-made creation and if allowed to breed freely would eventually revert more and more to wild type. Our challenge is to continue to move them towards the standard. These birds with overdeveloped traits are valuable to mate to birds that are of ideal type. Mating birds that are opposites (small vs large, cone-shaped tail vs plate tail, small muffs vs large muffs) are low percentage matings. They can produce good birds but mostly they produce birds with some of the extreme traits of the parents in different combinations so you end up no further ahead. While it seems logical, mating 2 birds that are well-balanced show birds is not a mating that I usually strive for. What you would expect from that mating is more of the same; well-balanced birds that may be good show birds. That may help you immediately in the show pen but it will not help you to move your family of birds forward. That is what the first mating type is designed to do; produce birds that advance your family of birds forward by adding strong traits.

Many breeders think ideal hens are “typey”; smaller, tight feathered birds. In my experience one of the biggest secrets to breeding a high percentage of good birds is exactly the opposite. I always look for hens that are large, strong birds, hopefully well developed in all traits. These hens are hard to find but absolutely essential in your breeding program.

In short, well balanced show birds have the best chance of producing birds that are able to advance your family by being mated to birds that are strong or overdeveloped in any traits that the other birds are weak in.

As far as colour is concerned you have many choices. Any solid coloured birds can generally be freely mated together with no ill effects. It helps if you become knowledgeable in genetics to assist you in being able to predict the colour of the young birds. Almond birds are best being kept in a separate family that includes kites, agates and recessive reds and yellows that are produced when the classical almond to kite mating is made. White is generally bred with whites but they can be bred into saddles and tailmarks to improve either of the marks. You will generally produce mismarks in the first generation but by the second generation you will be back to solid markings with superior birds.

There are many modifiers that are part of the Indian Fantail gene pool these days. Dominant and recessive opal, milky, recessive red and yellow, indigo and andalusian, brander bronze, grizzle, plus many more. There is no way to ever get bored with the myriad of choices available to our fanciers.

The best way to get a start breeding Indians is by joining the Canadian Indian Fantail Club. You will receive the standard, club bulletins, a list of club members, news on upcoming shows and breed information. We always appreciate additional members and will go out of our way to help in setting members up with birds and information that provides a start for new members.