

Nesting Ideas

By Daryl Felsberg

It seems like a modest idea, but there are many different routes you can explore concerning nesting. Some are good, some are bad. It greatly depends on the type of pigeon you enjoy. Most of the good ideas are relatively inexpensive. The idea, regardless of set up should be the protection and health of eggs, and squeakers. So I would like to share some ideas I have seen in other fancier's lofts as well as my own.

Now if you raise a pigeon bigger than a racing homer you have been faced with the dilemma of adequate nest bowls. Max Josey, successful Modena breeder, uses a 5gallon bucket cut in to rings about 5" deep. These rings, he actually throws the bottom of the bucket out. He puts the rings in the box and fills it with coastal hay. Then he simply slides the ring out over a garbage bag. after a few rounds throws the old nest away. Great idea! I personally do not like the hay, since it retains moisture and rots. That can be the beginning of future problems. However, you can not argue with the 2001 NMC Champion.

I once met a man who raised Caucious and Polish Linx which both happen to be large breeds, in Lubbock. He took 5 gallon buckets, tilted them back at a 45 degree angle on a 2x4 frame. He found an outlet in Plainview that recycled pallets. They crushed this wood into a wood chip. He then filled the bucket with a few inches of this material. It too, was successful.

One Wednesday, I made the journey to Pampa to visit Doug Keller, the King of the White Modenas. He shared with me and even gave me a sample of his secret: Pine Needles. Unlike hay pine needles drive away a lot of the pests that burden pigeons and their fanciers. Mix in a little Diatomaceous Earth and this is a great combination. The price you ask? A neighbor with a pine tree, a rake, and a few 55gal. bags. I am going to plant my own Pine trees this year, I think.

Often people complain, and rightfully so, of spraddle leg or crooked keels in pigeons. This can be contributed to a few things. Occasionally the young have nothing to grip to during development in the nest. Especially if the parents are poor nest builders. Nest pads are the right solution. They are inexpensive and reusable. Some folks mention the use of carpet padding. It is bountiful and often free, for the dimensions we need. Be cautious, some of the manufactures use harsh chemicals in the adhesives and they can retain moisture. Remember it is sponge.

Sometimes spraddle is the result of poor nesting and being an "only child". Jerry Soignier once had written of an idea he called the buddy rock. Simply

put , find a rock that is a little smaller than your fist, and a bit concave. Place the concave part against the squeaker to provide that support.

Tobacco stalks are another great idea for nesting materials. It is sold through most pigeon supply houses. It is good stuff as it diverts insects as well. It is not too costly, just not as readily available as pine needles. Might I add the odor is terribly strong. May not be the best solution for the smoker in the process of quitting!

So here is what I had done. I went to the Dollar General and bought (25) 2.5 buckets. Cut them back to about 5" deep. The base is about 12" across. I then tapped about (5) 1/4" holes in the bottom for ventilation. A nest pad fits right in the bottom. I then put about 2 cups of crushed corn cob, with a little Diatomaceous Earth, on top of that to act as a cushion. I then let the birds try their instinct to build a nest of pine needles or tobacco stalks. If they do not do such a good job, I can do what Doug Keller taught me: do it yourself!