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# Eclectus



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## *Origin*

Eclectus are the most sexually dimorphic of all parrots - that means the males and females look very different. Males are mostly green with red patches on their sides and under the wings. Their upper beak is yellow with brown streaks when a youngster, and changes to candy corn shades of orange, shading to yellow at the tip when they are about a year old. Females are colored a rich red with blue or violet on the front. Some have a ring of blue feathers around their eyes and some have a band of bright yellow on the end of the tail. Their beaks are black with a little yellow when they are young, which turns a rich black by about a year of age. There are four subspecies of Eclectus parrots commonly available: Solomon Island, Grand, Red Sided and Vosmaeri. Of these, the Solomon Island is the smallest and the Vosmaeri is the largest.

## *General Personality*

Eclectus parrots can make wonderful pets! They show affection, are intelligent, sensitive, like to play and are good talkers. They do like to study a new situation or person before “jumping in”. They need quality time and attention from their human family, but they don't need to be the center of attention all the time. Like other parrots their size, properly cared for Eclectus can live 30 years or more, so Eclectus ownership should be a lifetime commitment.

## *Food*

Eclectus need a diet that is mostly fresh and cooked vegetables, greens, fruits, beans and grains. Sprouts and sprouted seeds are also important along with dry seeds and nuts to round out the diet. A chopped hard boiled or dry scrambled egg included once or twice a week is also good. Most of the vegetables and fruits chosen should be high in beta carotene - these would be the red, orange, yellow and deep green/leafy vegetables and fruits. Examples are hot and sweet peppers, yams, carrots, beets, kale, collards and papaya. High Vitamin A is necessary and this can be found in mangoes and cantaloupe (plus the stringy mush and seeds). Quality pelleted foods (especially those without artificial colors or

preservatives) can also be offered to Eclectus as a part of the overall diet. Do not give your Eclectus vitamins or other supplements unless directed to do so by an avian veterinarian. Sunflower seed are high in fat and should only be offered as a treat. Grit and gravel are not necessary for most caged birds.

## *Health Care*

Be sure to take your Eclectus to the vet within a few days of purchase to ensure it is in good health. Eclectus parrots can get upset about going to the vet and, because of that, can show a highly elevated white blood cell count (called stress-related leukocytosis), even if they are not sick. Some vets unfamiliar with Eclectus may not know about this. They may become concerned that illness may exist, and want to treat with antibiotics. On your first visit to the vet, be sure your vet is aware of this “Eclectus quirk” so he/she can make the best decision about any need for antibiotics.

**The Parrot Club of Manitoba** meets the 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday of each month at 7:30 p.m. at St. Alban's Anglican Church, basement level, 486 Rathgar (off Osborne). Check community announcements or contact the club in case of changes. Several members of the Parrot Club of Manitoba have Eclectus as pets and would be able to tell you how these birds are in the home environment.

Winnipeg veterinarians with an interest in avian medicine are:

Dr. Heather McDonald of Centennial Animal Hospital  
Dr. Nancy McQuade of Winrose Animal Hospital  
Dr. Carolyn Eickhorn of Winrose Animal Hospital  
Dr. Birte Klug of Winrose Animal Hospital  
Dr. Andrew Davidson of Corydon Animal Hospital  
Dr. C. Skavinsky of Anderson Animal Hospital  
Dr. Lisa Sawka of Charleswood Veterinary Clinic