
Advice On Culling Tolbunt Grow Outs

Written by Courtney DuCharme, 1st published April 2018 in PBC Newsletter Spring 2018

If you are really serious about the variety, you already know you want to grow them out to at least 5-6 months old (8+ months is better) to make sure you are picking your best keepers. Tolbunt coloring itself will cull down your flock, but you want type and coloring- so making sure you have both will slim the keepers back even more.

Now if you are starting out and just bought so many chicks or eggs and hatched those- depending on your numbers you may end up keeping all of your girls and the best couple of boys. When I am telling people to cull hard for type and color- I am aiming that at people are hatching out of their own flock and have lots of babies to sort through.

When I bring in chicks or eggs from another person for new bloodlines, I normally end up with birds that would not make the cut in my own flock. This doesn't mean those people have bad birds- my flock is from 7+ years of hatching and culling VERY hard. And I keep those new lines separate from mine for several generations. I breed mine to them and cull the offspring very hard and keep the best of the cross between the 2 lines. Once the babies are breeding age- I normally send off the brought in parents, especially if they are not bring enough to the table for me to justify hatching from them another year. If there is a stellar one it stays in the breeding group with the offspring. Often the second cross in is the better one, it is now $\frac{3}{4}$ your line and so tends to have more of the traits you breed for.

When you are hatching out chicks from your flock and picking your keepers for the year. Decide how many you want to hold back.

Look for breed DQ's- cull those birds.

Look for variety DQ's- cull those birds.

I have culled some otherwise stellar birds for DQ's, but I have enough to do that with. I highly recommend unless you have limited stock- you also cull hard. You will thank yourself a lot if you are not fighting a DQ trait you promoted when your stock was low.

Weigh your birds- cull birds that weigh the least. These are large fowl- do not keep your smallest birds. (but on that note- they need to be fed a good feed when growing or you will not have good sized adults)

Narrow leg spacing? – CULL IT

Hopefully you are still over the number you want to keep, if so-

Under a year old and has lots of white- send it off. I repeat- Send. It. Off.

Poor Lacing? Especially the chest- Good bye birdy.

Redder base color verses yellower base color- between 2 otherwise equal birds- redder is better (UNLESS it is the hackle and saddle feathers of a male with no lacing and those areas are much redder. Then you could likely have red “bleeding”)

Additional Tips From Different Tolbunt Committee Write Ups Over The Years:

I have seen several posts on facebook lately on what to look for with keepers. My advice is as always to cull out any structural defects right away, send off any young birds that have a lot of white come in on back and wings when they are feathering out, and those that are feathering in with predominantly solid red feathers. If the structure and coloring is looking good- grow them out until they are 6-7 months at least so you can choose your best typed ones



with the most correct color. Remember they are a mottled laced variety- with a red base and black lacing. They also get whiter with each molt, so you want to select the bird with less white when choosing between 2 otherwise equal young birds. A bird with a lot of mottling in its first year will likely be a bird that only shows well in its first year due to getting whiter with each molt. Always keep type over color; a rabbit judge friend of mine used to always remind exhibitors to build their barns before they painted them. Perfect markings on poor type will take your program backwards, you do need to pay attention to markings, but it should come second to type.

I have had people asking how to keep their birds from getting too white too quick- I will recommend the same advice I got from a few judges when I first got started in tolbunt Polish. Breeding mottled x mottled generation after generation creates excessive white as the years go

by. The judges I first spoke to had raised mottled varieties of other breeds (black mottled birds) and they recommended every few generations breeding to a solid to clean up the extra white. To me the “solid” version of tolbunt is gold lace (the redder the better), which is why I use gold lace split to tolbunt in my program too. Some people have used self-black polish when they can find them as well with decent results after a few generations.



My favorite comment on one of my tolbunts at a Fowl Fest in MI

This is Courtney the chairperson of the PBC's Tolbunt Polish Committee, and I have the most wonderful news- Tolbunt Polish finally have a working standard that was ok'd by members of the APA Standards committee!!!! There were some wording changes that occurred, when we started this journey we were advised to start working with the APA as soon as we could. We were also advised to vary little from the German Standard, the German standard has a color range so we chose APA terms that reflected those. However, the APA standards committee members wanted us to pick one color verses a range (which is understandable) and preferred us to use a lighter sounding term- Dark Golden Bay- as the base color verses the reddish bay to mahogany bay that was the written range in our draft. Both the PBC tolbunt committee members and a Facebook group that is just for breeders that have shown interest in helping get the variety accepted into APA voted on several color options and Dark Golden Bay won in the group vote as well.

Although the word golden is in the color description, it is important for breeders to remember that the “dark” part is the key for more correct coloring when choosing birds. You still

want to aim toward the reddish-brown tone verses a yellowish-gold tone on your birds- the committee just felt overall the birds were not red enough to be red bay, nor dark enough to be considered mahogany bay and wanted the standard to reflect an achievable coloring for breeders for presentation.

You also will want to make sure you are keeping boys with an even color tone overall- verses ones with the very rich red hackles and saddle feathers if the body feathers do not match that tone- too much color difference there is likely due to red leakage verses correct coloring. The hackles and saddle feathers on males should show lacing and not just red feathers.

The final note I see multiple post each month with people confused on tol bunt verses "candy corn" markings. We recently had a great discussion on one of the facebook pages I think that breaks things down the best for people who are having issues telling them apart. Tol bunt polish are laced with mottling- tol bunt polish cannot have any barring- it will be a disqualification with the variety. If there is barring with no lacing- you have either cuckoo or crele (cuckoo with orange/red barring too) and if you have BOTH lacing and barring- you have "candy corn". Only tol bunts should have mottling (white tips on an even looking portion of their feathers overall)- cuckoo, crele, "candy corn", and laced varieties should not.