

Beanwood Blues....By Kate Hart

I had always thought that the salmons were my favourite colour, with the striking differences between the male and female in plumage. Then Simon Harvey turned up 4 years ago with a cardboard box containing a wonderful trio of bantam blue faverolles. The cockerel peered up at me and chuckled, and I was smitten!

I have to admit I didn't know a great deal about breeding blues, not that I do now, but I do hope I know a bit more than I did then. Maybe a few hardened salmon faverolles owners may consider this lovely bantam as part of their faverolles flock? These tubby, friendly faverolles only take a couple of minutes to endear themselves, with their pretty blue lacing and dark eyes.

At Beanwood we have had a few challenges along the way regarding our blue breeding program. In order to improve type, we resorted to using a really nice typey salmon bantam, at the time we felt the gene pool was just too narrow to make any significant headway otherwise. Using salmon meant that the next couple of generations had a fair amount of gold leakage, as you would expect, especially in the hackle of the cockerels. Although progress has been slow, it's been rather fun with a few colourful all sorts running around the garden!

Back to basics, so what is blue? Well it's not strictly a colour, but in simple terms more of a dilution of black. Blue does not breed "true" as it is an unstable gene which is why you get different combinations when breeding blue to blue. Typically you could expect get a ratio of one third each of black, splash and blue. If you want to hatch just blue offspring you would need to use a combination of black to splash, then 100% of the chicks should be blue. Blue to splash about 50:50 blue and splash chicks. So although splash isn't a standard colour, it is very useful in breeding just blues. Just a note here regarding blacks bred from blue, they make lovely pets, however for breeding purposes to get that lovely beetle green sheen it's my experience breeding black to black gets the best results.

History of the Blues..

In the UK the first bantam blues appeared in 1968 from Gordon Watkins, apparently as a sport. John Kraft developed the first true blue bantam strain however in 1973. They were standardised by the PCGB in 1979.

The Blue Faverolles..

Calls for a "laced blue" so what does that mean I hear you say? It means that the feather ideally should have nice wide webbing, blue inside and a black fringe giving this lovely blue laced appearance, with clearly defined feathering.

BFS Standard..

Eyes black or brown. Beak black
Legs and feet black or blue

Male: Plumage of head, muffling, hackles, back, tail and wingbows a uniform dark blue. Remainder a rich blue each feather laced a dark shade.

Female: Uniform blue, each feather laced a dark shade.

Defects: White in foot feather, pale eyes a minor fault.

Serious defects: White in wing or brassiness in hackle or saddle.

A couple of Beanwood Blue Bantams

