Foraging: Essential Environment Enrichment

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Will work for FOOD

Caged birds share some of the same behavioral characteristics as their wild cousins, but their environments are hugely different. Our birds have every meal available for them. Although a controlled environment may seem ideal, providing food, safety from predators, and from inclement weather, in this type of environment, your bird may be denied the
one thing he enjoys the most in the wild - hunting for and pecking his food, known as foraging.

Foraging provides the environmental enrichment caged birds require. Environmental enrichment creates a more natural environment and, in return, stimulates natural behaviors in your bird. It also keeps your bird's environment a challenge, so that your bird stays busy and active like he would in nature.

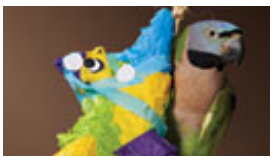
Wild birds spend up to 6 hours foraging for food and additional time manipulating the food with their beaks and feet. Denial of environmental enrichment through foraging may cause boredom-related problems, such as feather picking, sleeping too much, screaming or squawking.

It is easy to give your bird foraging opportunities. Start with for foraging treatsand progress up to using your bird's favorite foc foods You can do this by incorporating foraging opportunities in his everyday life.

If foraging is new to your bird, you may have to start slowly, making the food items easier to access at first, and then work towards more complicated and challenging methods that will keep him stimulated. In the beginning, let your bird see you hide his food or treats; he'll be curious as to what you're doing and will want to investigate.

Some favorite toys to include in your bird's foraging adventures:

Piñatas: You can fill these with your bird's favorite foods, hang it from your bird's cage, and let your bird tear and peck at the outside of the piñata until she reaches the treats inside.



1. Integrate foraging activities into familiar items, such as your bird's food dish food dish or crock. Place a small amount of food in the bird's food dish and bury it with polished stones,wood, beads, or shredded paper. Make sure items you are using to bury the food are too large for your bird to eat.

2. Next, cover or wrap the dish with something light and easily shreddable – like a coffee filter, a paper towel, or even a lettuce leaf. Don't forget to let your bird see you hide the delicacies initially, to tempt him to investigate. Once your bird understands the foraging game, you can go on to more interesting challenges.

3. For a more interesting challenge, use the Foraging System and Foraging Tre Foraging Treat Box. These multi-compartmental food and treat dispensers make eating a long-lasting event. Fill some or all of the compartments with food or treats, so your bird has to chew his way through one compartment to the next, hunting for his food. At such an economical price, you can afford to use these boxes daily.

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Puzzle Boxes: These toys are usually made of acrylic and have

openings that you can fill with your bird's favorite foods. Some of these toys have openings that your bird needs to reach into to get the food out. Other puzzle boxes will require your bird to move panels or manipulate the toy in certain ways before the food is made available to them.

Foraging System: Bird product creators are realizing the importance of foraging for birds. Whole systems with replaceable parts are available for birds from finches to Amazons and at every level from beginning forager to master. These can be filled again and again with your bird's favorite foods and will offer a daily challenge.

Place multiple boxes throughout the cage and change their location often for even more of a challenge.

4 Initially, have your bird forage for partial meals. Depending on how much fun he is having, you can gradually move to feeding most of his food through this method. Check the foraging items daily to make sure your bird is getting the nutrition he needs.

5 Another step up might include a refillable treat toy that contains some of his favorite food. Perhaps puzzle t puzzle toys to make his playtime educational and enjoyable. Puzzle toys are available in a variety of styles to ensure a diverse experience for caged birds. Integrating problem-solving activities during playtime offer mental and physical stimulation that develop and hone successful foraging skill.

As you can see there are a lot of different ways to encourage foraging with your bird and it does not have to cost you a lot of money. "Finding" his own food makes the search for sustenance personal and challenging. Have fun thinking of new ways for your bird to forage and be creative.

Related Articles

- Tips to encourage bird foraging behaviors
- Food for thought: foraging toys teach and tantalize
- Bird stress checklist

WE RECOMMEND

Foraging System

Honeycomb-style box you fill with your bird's favorite food or treats.

Foraging Treat Box

Pre-filled, compartmentalized inner sections store a plethora of fruit and nut treats.

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