A Colorful Diet is a Healthy Diet

Drs. Foster & Smith Educational Staff

The variety of bird feather colors is nothing short of spectacular. It is not surprising, then, that birds can see a variety of colors that surpasses our own; some can even see into the ultraviolet spectrum.

Inside out

Tropical species exhibit a wide range of colors and special adaptations. Feather color is determined from the way the light strikes it caused by the structure of the feather or by the presence of various pigments. Some of these pigments are called carotenoids. Carotenoids are generally yellow, orange, or red in color. They are synthesized in plants, and absorbed by the bird's digestive system, and then taken up by the cells of the follicle as the feather is developing.

Some foods contain natural ingredients, such as carotenoids (beta-carotene, a form of Vitamin A is one, while canthaxanthin is another), that can highlight your bird's coloring. Quiko Special Red for Red Canaries is one food that contains canthaxanthins. In addition, vibrant fruits like fresh ripe pineapple,

Outside in

You can see from wild bird behavior that some birds are attracted to color – hummingbirds seem to prefer red, for example. Birds may even have a greater response to food with nature-inspired colors, including greens, yellows, and other natural colors such as tan or beige. Feed your bird fruits and veggies (greens like kale and broccoli are rich in vitamins and minerals, too) in addition to a naturally-colored and -flavored pellet diet, like NEW naturally colored Higgins InTune, to ensure your bird gets the nutrients he craves.

Not only will your bird enjoy it – a colorful diet is as healthy

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and veggies like bell peppers and carrots, all have naturally occurring carotenoids.

for him as it is for us.

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