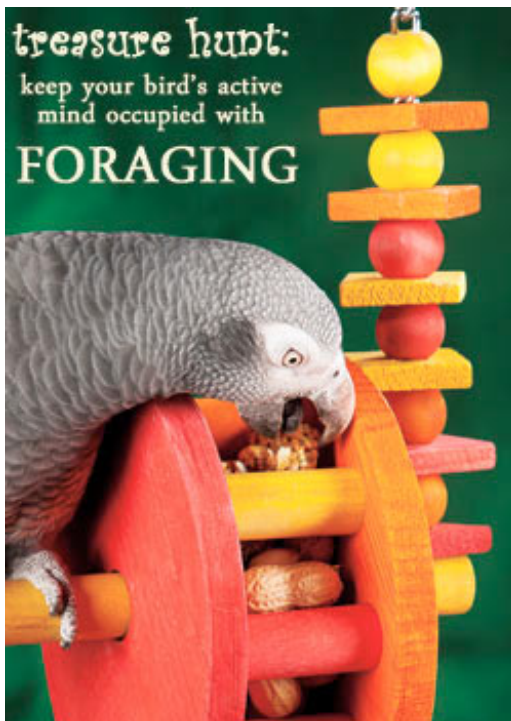


Treasure hunt: keep your bird's active mind occupied with foraging

Drs. Foster & Smith Educational Staff



Foraging is the act of searching for and finding food. In the wild, foraging for food is part of a bird's daily routine and occupies a large portion of his time – in many cases over half of his waking hours. If foraging activity is not encouraged in your pet bird, he has many more hours per day with nothing to fill his time. This lack of foraging activity can affect your bird's physical and emotional well-being, causing boredom, behavioral problems (such as feather picking), and a lack of natural curiosity.

Types of foraging

- **Wrapping** Place "treasure" (food or treats) inside something safe for the bird, such as [Paper Rope](#) and close the ends together by twisting them. A larger bird handles the wrapped item with his feet; for a smaller bird, attach it to the cage and the bird works on it while it is hanging.
- **Hiding** Place a small amount of the "treasure" in the bird's food dish and bury it with polished stones, wood, or beads (please see [build your own toys](#)) or shredded paper. Make sure items you use to bury the food are too large for your bird to eat.
- **Outside of the food dish** A bird that does not normally eat fresh fruits and vegetables will likely try them if the food is hanging from the cage. Use food in its natural state, such as leafy greens, carrots with tops, and others, and hang using convenient [Treat Holders](#).



Easy does it: Products made for foraging

- Fill a [Piñata](#) with your bird's favorite foods, hang it from the cage, and let your bird tear and peck at the outside of the piñata until she reaches the treats inside. Some even come with treats and other interesting birdsafe items already included.



● **Puzzle Boxes** like the [House of Treats](#) or [Treat Drawers](#) are made of tough polycarbonate and have openings you can fill with favorite foods or treats. Some of these have openings to reach into; others require moving panels or manipulating the toy in certain ways before the food is made available.



● **Kabobs** are an easy and quick way to hang enticing fresh fruits and vegetables in your bird's cage. Simply stack the food on the skewer and hang from the cage, and it is ready to go. This encourages picky birds to sample fresh fruits and vegetables if they don't normally eat it from their dish.



Besides healthy fresh fruits and veggies, treats to help your bird forage include pieces of [millet](#), our quality dried [fruits](#) and [nuts](#).

As you can see, there are a lot of different ways to encourage foraging activity. If this is new to your bird, start with simple techniques and move onto more complicated methods as your bird gets more curious. Have fun thinking of new ways for your bird to forage and be creative.