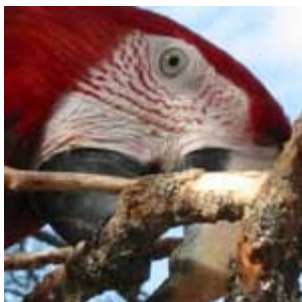


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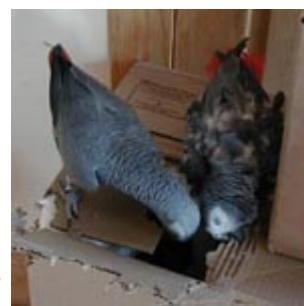
Foraging for Food



Parrots are very active creatures in the wild; waking up just before dawn and flying through forest canopies around sunrise in their daily quest for food. Some fly short distances, some longer and depending upon their location and season, food may be plentiful or in short supply with many forest creatures to compete with. In the wild, the birds will spend a few hours in the morning foraging and feeding and then rest or engage in play, bathing, drinking, allopreening and other social activities. Parrots will then feed again in the afternoon, before gathering into flocks or groups and fly back to their roosting tree where they often call loudly, making quite a ruckus before settling in for

the night.

As you can see, a wild parrot's day is very full of various activities and a primary one is that of finding food or foraging. It is a very different situation for a captive bird where we hand them food in a bowl. In order to try and fulfill parrots needs, the activities we give them are sometimes more nesting related and at times behavior problems can be a result. In the better interest of captive parrots they should be offered foraging activities and also some problem solving for mental stimulation. After all, a parrot's intelligence rating is right up there with dolphins and great apes; so keeping them challenged also helps them be happier. The following are some easy ideas for foraging.



Wrap foods bowls with paper. Take a square of paper that will fit over the top and sides of bowl and enough to tuck underneath. Place in the bowl holder. For the first time or two, poke a hole in the middle of the paper to start the parrot to unwrap their meal.

Take non toxic cardboard tubes and stuff them with surprises. You can wrap a nut in a piece of paper and stuff in tubes along with toys or other food.



When offering a seed or nut treat, wrap it in paper first. You can fold the paper several times around the item or twist the paper on. Try a variety of ways and for the first time parrot, unwrap the treat in front of them to show them the goodie, then rewrap and offer it.

Put some polished or washed stones (large enough not to swallow) in a dish, either in the food dish holder or one the cage floor. Hide some treats underneath the stones.



If your bird has rope perches or boings, hide nuts or seed in between the strands.

Stainless steel puzzle toys can be used to hide treats. These are usually a cylinder with a top that screws on. If your bird doesn't ingest foreign objects then some plastic containers with screw or pop on tops can be used for treats.

Drill holes in a piece of untreated soft wood about the diameter of a seed or nut in the shell. Insert item and give a little pound with the hammer to secure it.

Cover the cage grate with paper or towels. Place some food on top and cover with more paper or towels.



Clean untreated pinecones that have been washed and put in an oven at 250 degrees for 20 minutes to make a fun foraging activity. You can even hide some food if you like. Perhaps smear a bit of almond butter inside.

Untreated baskets with lids can be great fun and house surprises. When offering surprises, don't forget that birds also like to find special toys. Foot toys are wonderful to hide.

Fruit or vegetables kabobs in skewers are always a fun idea and even picky eaters often enjoy playing with whole leaves and other produce.

Let them have fun making a mess. Offer whole pumpkins, brussel sprouts or celery stalks. Wrap foods in romaine lettuce or other leaves...and for a treat, hide a favorite food inside.

There are cage nut toys that can be purchased at The Bird Brain in a variety of shapes and colors. You can place toys, wooden blocks, wrapped surprises, and food slices for your bird.



A parrot's life can be enriched by offering it some challenges and thus activity and independence, resulting in them having a sense of accomplishment each day. Be creative and offer food and certain toys in fun stimulating ways.

Happy foraging! ~by Shauna Roberts

Creative minds always have been known to survive any kind of bad training.
-Anna Freud

Please keep in mind that all of these beautiful feathered beings living at The Foundation are dependant upon the kindness and generosity of humans for their continued care, health and happiness.

If you would like to help Foraging for Food and other birds in need, please [sign up for our sponsorship program](#). Thank you!