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It's our 8th Year Anniversary, and we're giving away a [YEAR'S WORTH OF BIRDY TOYS!](#)
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Read on for food foraging tips...

Tips for CREATING AN ENRICHING ENVIRONMENT USING FOOD...

It's time to get your ideas flowing! How can we use food to create an enriching environment for our pets? What can we do to make our bird think and make him work for his nutrition?

It is so easy and fun to create foraging treats for your birdy.

* **Making pellets or seeds interesting** - how about putting pellets or seeds in different bowls located in varying positions of the cage? Put the pellets inside a toy or a paper cup (*Note: Please do not use wax paper cups*) all folded up ~ as to make a pouch.

* **Stuffed Foraging Wreath:** A 8-10"

Natural Willow or Grapevine Wreath can house a multitude of treasures for all beaks! Whole carrots with tops, green beans, pea pods, cinnamon sticks will all provide a fun, natural foraging experience. Then the wreath can be attached to the back of a cage or playgym with vegetable tanned leather or rope.

* **Zany Ziti:** Using a single cooked Ziti pasta and a butter knife, spread almond butter or plain yogurt inside the walls of the ziti. Cut some vegetables (Carrots, Zucchini, Beets.. in "julienne style").

* **Pouch Surprise:** Using a large leafy green (i.e. Kale, Mustard Greens, Beet Greens) and take some leftover Brown Rice (brown rice is more nutritional than white rice) and pour it into the center of the leaf. You can add some Cranberries, Sprouts, Raisins, or Blueberries. Try not to over fill the leaf. Grab all the ends of the leaf and tie them together to form a pouch. If you would prefer to make a veggie or fruit mash: Take some of their favorites and throw them in the food processor and use that in your Pouch Surprise!

Use something that you know they love and can smell. Some birds like a whiff of cinnamon or the smell of parsley. *Our flock seems to enjoy fresh garlic.* Take about a foot of 100% Natural Cotton Rope and tie a knot and make a loop at the end to affix it in the inside of your bird's cage. Vegetable tanned leather strips can also be used.

They will be very curious of this new fun and healthy toy you placed in their cage and they will rip apart the leaf and find the little surprises you have tucked within.

* **Pocket Treats.** Using corn husks or butcher paper, add some favorite treats and twist the ends to seal. Place these fun pouches in between the bars of your birdie's cage. *(Please No adhesives or tape please!)*

* **Fill a toy bowl** with wood beads and parts and sprinkle nuts and seeds so they fall in between the layers of toy parts. Your parrot will "hunt" for all the nuts & goodies. *Remember* to allow your bird to watch you place the goodies in there the first few times. This will help in building their foraging skills.

* **Weave large leafy greens** through the cage bars. Watch your birds tear it to shreds!

* **Hang fresh vegetables and fruits from a [stainless steel skewer](#).** Stainless steel skewers are available in many sizes and are located at the following link: [Click for Stainless Steel Skewers](#). Skewers can also be used for making toys with leftover toy parts. Always keeping in mind, *change is good for your birdie!*

* **Offer whole foods** such as a whole carrot with green tops (very healthy for them), one whole garlic clove (natural antibiotic) or a peeled beet with healthy beet greens still attached. You can tie it to their cage or play area with a piece of leather.

* **Stuff a raw artichoke** with pine nuts and place in a food bowl. Our birds love to dig out the pine nuts then destroying the artichoke. *Remember...* each time they bite into a leaf, they are getting a taste of the "artichoke meat" and the nutrition from it.

* **Take a full head of broccoli** and cut in half. Using your bird's favorite treat nut (almond, pistachio, sunflower seeds, etc) and hide them in the florettes. Tie the broccoli head to the side of the cage. Later, you will come home to find it completely shredded.

If your bird has never learned how to forage or play with toys, you may need to start slowly using positive reinforcement. It's helpful to use your birds' favorite food items as a teaching tool. It could be seeds, raisins or a piece of birdy bread.

Watch your bird and see what he/she really likes and then don't feed that specific piece of food, *except when in training.* This will increase the value of the food to your pet.

Here is one example of how you can teach your bird to forage..

If the end result is to tear through a paper bag filled with popcorn or some other treat, begin by first placing the treat in the open bag while your bird is watching you.

Praise your bird for going to the bag and getting his food. Next, put the food in the bag but this time, close the bag but tear a small section so they can see what's inside.

Once again.. Praise your bird for getting the food. Eventually your bird will learn there are goodies in store when he tears the bag open on his own.

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