

# Foraging Baskets

In this pamphlet I will show you how a small to medium sized basket can be turned into a cage toy that encourages shredding and foraging activity. Thrift stores or craft stores like Michael's are great sources for finding baskets to use for this purpose. Be sure to choose only untreated baskets made of natural sea-grass, wicker or willow.



Once I find a basket appropriately sized to the parrot and suitable for attaching to the bars inside the cage, I go to work customizing it. If you are planning on attaching the basket to the cage bars, you will want to insert 2 zip ties to the back of the basket before you start tying on toys and filling the basket.

Notice each zip tie is threaded through about 2 ribs on the basket. This allows for a more secure attachment to the cage bars since more of the basket is attached.



I tie on any number of items to the sides of the basket such as plastic animals, plastic bell balls, wacky whirly straws, drilled corn, pieces of grass mats for shredding, rope or leather knots, plastic beads and rings, wood, foot toys, etc.

## Foraging Baskets



I also put a few items loose inside the basket such as favorite foot toys, small boxes stuffed with treats or nuts, plastic animals, coin wrappers stuffed with veggie sticks, nuts wrapped in corn husks—anything I think will peak their interest.

Hoping for more persistent activity, I added a birdie bread muffin. I bake a hole in my bird bread muffins so I can add them to toys. I added broccoli, collard green leaf and a carrot stick.

You will find me repeatedly recommending to incorporate food into toys. I find I can get my parrots to keep active much longer on a toy with food on it or hidden within it.



This basket is intended for Buddy, an experienced forager. I know I can add levels of complexity and he will forage through everything until all that is left is a semblance of the basket.

Once I cover everything with shredded paper, I feel it is complete and ready to put in his cage.

If I was making this ahead of time, I would add the bread and vegetables right before I put it in his cage. Or I could complete it the evening before and store in the refrigerator until the next morning.



## Foraging Baskets

When I'm satisfied I have enough items on and in the basket, I secure it to the cage bars with the zip ties.

Quite often I find my birds climbing back in the cage trying to get at the basket before I've managed to secure it to the bars. They can hardly wait to start foraging in their baskets.



**Of Note:** If your parrot is not accustomed to foraging baskets, you may want to start slow. Build a basket with just a few of his favorite items tied on and a couple treats loose inside. Gradually add more items and increase the level of difficulty slowly. For example, tie on a piece of bird bread in plain sight and easy to get to. Later wrap a small strip of newspaper on the piece of bread so that the bread is slightly covered but still visible to the bird. Gradually widen the strip of paper until your parrot becomes so experienced at foraging that you can eventually wrap the bread entirely



**HOW TO RECYCLE USED BASKETS**



After one parrot is finished playing with his/her basket, there is usually some part leftover that can be recycled into a new smaller basket toy to be fastened to the cockatiel's cage.



Gracie is also happy with a basket of twigs. She kept at this one until there was little left but the handle.



## Foraging Baskets—How To Recycle Used Baskets



I have a large pair of tin snips that I use to cut up used baskets. I cut away the parts that have droppings on them or are otherwise soiled and save the remaining parts. I use these left over basket parts to thread on skewers with other toy parts, drilled corn, vegetable or fruit pieces and hang them in the cage. The birds will chew through the baskets to get to the items on the skewer or kabob.

Here I have taken parts of recycled baskets to add to a food skewer toy. A collard green leaf, red pepper and broccoli hidden between the top two basket parts. Then ending with a piece of carrot, red pepper and another basket part.



Here we see the entire toy. You can add any number of things to these skewers: dried corn, plastic toy parts, wood, etc.

Let your imagination go and have fun with these toys.

## Foraging Baskets—How To Recycle Used Baskets

This is an excellent way to incorporate food into a toy that also has material that can be chewed, shredded and destroyed.

How much better can it get?



On this toy I put a cute little basket at the bottom to hold foot toys and treats. Ditto, of course, goes for the pomegranate first thing.



Ditto shredding recycled baskets.

**Do Ahead Tip:** I will make up skewers like the ones in the photo the night before and place them in the refrigerator. In the morning they are all ready to put in the cage right before I leave the house. The fruit and vegetables have been refrigerated and are good to leave in the cage while I'm gone. I have so much success with this foraging toy that I have a small dormitory size refrigerator in my toy making room that I use for just this purpose.

This pamphlet is intended to provide helpful and informative material on the subject matter covered. It is distributed with the understanding that the author is not engaged in rendering professional services in the pamphlet. The author specifically disclaims any responsibility for any liability, loss, or risk, personal or otherwise, which is incurred as a consequence, directly or indirectly, of the use and application of any of the contents of this pamphlet. The author assumes no legal liability or responsibility for the accuracy, completeness, or usefulness of any information, product or process disclosed in these examples.

**Copyright © 2009 Kris Porter.** All rights reserved. This pamphlet may be printed, shared and distributed so long as it remains fully intact including this copyright notice and no profit is made from its distribution or use.