

## What is foraging and why is it important for my parrot?

Quite simply, foraging is the act of searching for or working for food.

Birds in the wild spend a large part of their day searching for their food. In contrast, many pet birds are left 'idling' for most of the day when their owner is out and about. These birds have their food served to them on a silver platter, so to speak and spend a fairly short time each day actually eating.

All of this spare time can lead to boredom behaviours like screaming/squawking, feather plucking, self mutilation (chewing skin) and excessive chewing or destructive behaviours (towards toys, perches, household).

Most food bowls also have far more than the bird needs per day and the bored bird will make a game of tossing food out of the bowl or grinding up their pellets into dust without eating all of them.

Birds are intelligent creatures that need to be kept active and stimulated. Providing natural branches for perches, fresh browse, a range of chewing toys and of course, time interacting with their humans and out of the cage/flying, are all important.

Foraging however, also needs to play a big part in your birds' day.

Creating foraging opportunities for pet birds at home can keep them fit, occupied and is good for mental development as well as preventing those unwanted problems. This can be easy to implement and it's never too late to start, no matter the age of the bird. All breeds are capable of foraging - even the small guys like Budgies and Cockatiels, you just need to pick size-appropriate toys.

There's so many different things you can do to get your bird foraging, including some homemade/DIY things you can do as well as a wide range of toys made specifically for this purpose.

Take a look at my YouTube channel for ideas, it shows my own pets using their foraging toys to get their food. My flock no longer have food bowls and work for all of their food by: spinning wheels, chewing through cardboard, opening toy drawers etc throughout the day.

YouTube Channel [www.youtube.com/AnimalEnrichmentAustralia](http://www.youtube.com/AnimalEnrichmentAustralia)

Website [www.animalenrichmentaustralia.com](http://www.animalenrichmentaustralia.com)