

Never too young

# Foot Toys

Busy Beaks  
ARE  
Happy Beaks



**R**ecently I was asked, what's the deal with foot toys? What a ridiculous question! Isn't it obvious? NOT!

Let me share just a few reasons for making sure you have an endless supply of foot toys for your FIDs (feathered kids). Foot toys are a great "tool" for young parrots to use when they are learning how to hold something in one foot and



keep their balance without falling down. You can watch them as they wiggle, wobble – trying not to drop their "treasure" yet unsteady being on one leg. As they get more coordinated, you can watch as they explore the piece with their tongue, trying to decide if it's edible or not. It's a great way to introduce them to a variety of textures, colors, sizes, shapes – the more exposure they have to different things, the more likely they



are of being able to entertain themselves when you just can't be there.

Our cockatoos love to hold things in their feet, turn them



around, feel the texture, tongue the pieces or fling it at will. Sometimes they use it as a means of getting attention ... you can almost see them saying, *"I wonder how many times I can throw this before she gets tired of picking it up and giving it back to me?"* It's a game that THEY never seem to get tired of! Some like all the interaction to be with you and others will take their treasure elsewhere and turn it into toothpicks as quickly as possible. You get the studious ones that check every inch of the toy out, rolling it over and over again to see if it'll do anything ... and others that just have a buzz-saw beak approach – *beak and destroy!!*



Our Eclectus are not inclined to hold things with their feet but if you mount a simple block onto their cage, shove some clothespins onto the bars or put it into a bowl then they have a great time chewing on it. So even those parrots that don't like to "hold" things, enjoy foot toys in a different fashion... in a bowl or mounted!

## MAKE YOUR OWN!

Cottage industry and/or commercially manufactured foot toys are relatively inexpensive



but you can make your own for FREE! We use walnuts to roll on the floor and Sydney, our Greater Sulphur Crested Cockatoo will catch it and bring it back with a flick of his head, hopping and laughing while bobbing up and down... and the real bonus is when he's done playing, he cracks the walnut open and eats it! We also have a form of monkey in the middle that we play with Chapin, our female GSC2, where she flings the nut (her favorite is pecan) and you fetch it while



she hops after you! This is a great way to spend some quality time with your FID.

Corn on the cob is a great foot toy and sometimes we partially pop it (*make sure it's thoroughly cooled before giving to your bird!*) It's amazing to see that each of our twelve parrots has a different way of handling the cob! It's a fun toy with a bonus (it's nutritious too!)

A few suggestions for safe, inexpensive foot toys are:

- Old fashioned wooden clothespins (no metal parts)
- Clean craft (Popsicle-type) sticks
- Plain paper plates (not the waxed type), brown lunch bags filled with something (popped corn, broken wooden parts from old toys, etc.) and tied with some sisal, 100% cotton cord, etc.
- Pinecones – great fun but make sure they haven't been sprayed and are free of pests, etc. (and

(over)

you can get VERY creative with these natural treats as well – that’s a tale for another day)



- Empty wooden spoons (from thread)
- Whole nuts in the shell
- Broken toy parts from hanging toys (keep an extra empty bowl in your parrots house as a “toy box” so you can put those odd pieces that still have life left to good use)
- Dowels (go to the hardware store, buy a dowel and cut it into foot-size pieces appropriate for your parrot)
- Wooden ABC blocks (make sure they are non toxic) that you can pick up at your local toy store (drill holes in them for added texture)
- Lollipop sticks
- Buy 2” x 2” lumber and cut it into 2” pieces for cheap, de-stroyable foot cubes!
- CLEAN old socks (natural fabric



only), washed, knotted or balled (you can even put a “treasure” inside like a pecan, almond or walnut)

- Small baskets, straw hats, etc. found in hobby shops small gift boxes that you can put goodies into (popcorn, nuts, wooden pieces, etc)
- Infant toys and stuffed animals (you can find lots of safe, clean items at your garage sales)



- Old phone books, junk mail magazines, catalogs (plus it’s a great way to recycle). If they are too big, get someone to cut them on a band saw into more manageable pieces, weave thru cage bars (messy and fun).
- Corn husks (tamale wrap-pers)
- Adding machine paper (cheap, destroyable and easy to find at your local office supply)

It does NOT have to be expensive to be fun!

**USE YOUR IMAGINATION!**

Please use common sense with giving your birds anything new for the first time. Make sure they don’t “eat” items that aren’t suppose to be consumed, never give them small parts that can be swallowed – if you give them “hardware” to play with (nuts & bolts are big favorites for those mechanical FIDs), be sure that they are appropriately sized and **STAINLESS STEEL**

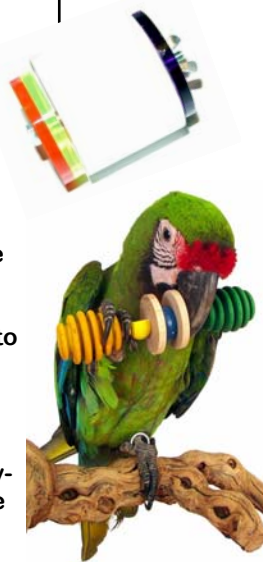


only! There’s so much going on about metal toxicity that there is absolutely no reason to take unnecessary chances with your beloved avian companion! Check all items around and near the cage daily, trim or remove frayed or worn toys, and spend as much time as you can enjoying your feathered family!

I’m confident that when you put your mind to it, you can come up with a hundred other things that your parrot would enjoy... and if you simply don’t have the time or inclination to do so ... then please look at our website (<http://www.busybeaks.com>) or call us at 936-344-8400 because we have the **PERFECT** toy for your FID!



©2001-10 Jan Graham



**YOUR ONE-STOP PARROT SHOP!**  
 Bell Plastics, Birdie Bogglers & Bagels, Bird Kabobs, Birds of Play, Bizzy Birdy Playthings, Brainy Bird Toys, Busy Beaks Toys, Cage ‘n Queen, Fetch-It Pets, Fun Max, JUST Fruit & Veggies, Lucky Bird Toys, Molly’s Bird Toys, Paradise Toys, Planet Pleasures™, Poop-Off, Super Bird Creations and much more so YOUR *“Busy Beaks are Happy Beaks”™!*

[www.busybeaks.com](http://www.busybeaks.com)  
[busybeakstoys@aol.com](mailto:busybeakstoys@aol.com)



458 Lucher Rd.  
 Willis, TX 77378  
 936-344-8400 voice  
 936-344-8406 fax