

## Pumpkin Foraging Toys

Whole vegetables can be made into great foraging toys. One of my flocks favorites are the mini-pumpkins. Small pumpkins are priced fairly reasonably in grocery stores in late October through November. At other times of the year similar foraging opportunities can be provided using whole zucchini, butternut squash or red or green peppers.



Here I cut the top out of a small pumpkin and put some fruit and vegetables inside. Then I placed the lid on with a little room on the side so my parrot could see there were items of interest inside the pumpkin.

I also carved holes in the sides of the pumpkin and stuffed nuts, vegetables and nutri-berries in the holes.

I placed a sheet of cardboard and then newspaper on the top of Zorba's cage and then put the pumpkin there.

Zorba flew right to the pumpkin and began foraging.



This food toy kept Zorba busy for about 30 minutes. Which is a long time for Zorba.

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I put one whole small pumpkin on a food skewer to hang in Ditto's cage. I placed a vine ball stuffed with corn husks at the top of the skewer and then the pumpkin top and pumpkin. I carved holes in the sides and stuffed this pumpkin in the same way I stuffed Zorba's pumpkin .

I used a piece of cardboard underneath the pumpkin to hold it more securely on the food skewer.

Elvis appeared to be uncomfortable when presented with a whole pumpkin on a skewer. He slicked his feathers down and backed away from the pumpkin when I showed it to him.

So I tried cutting a pumpkin in half and seeing if that would be acceptable to Elvis.



Apparently it is all in the presentation. Elvis went right to the half pumpkin and started foraging.

If he had been afraid of this—I would have tried slices of pumpkin on a food skewer along with apples and other items that I know he likes.

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Patio Sun Decks are available in two sizes at <http://www.avianenrichment.com/>

Here is another idea for using pumpkins to create a foraging opportunity.

I fastened a small basket to a hanging “Patio Sun Deck” and placed half of a small pumpkin inside the basket. I filled the pumpkin with vegetables, nuts and fruit.

This is yet another example of how you could present a pumpkin. If your parrot was showing fear of the whole pumpkin or a pumpkin on a skewer—he might accept a pumpkin presented in this way.

When pumpkins aren't available you can make similar toys out of other whole vegetables.

- Zucchini Squash
- Butternut Squash
- Artichokes
- Peppers
- Cucumbers



Caroline Moore made this one by cutting the end off a zucchini and stuffing it with other foods and fastening the end back on with wooden skewers.



This is one you've seen before in The Parrot Enrichment Activity Books, but I thought I would include the example for inspiration. Artichokes are easily made into great foraging toys.



Here we have another creation from Caroline Moore. She stuffed a pepper with her parrot's mash diet and topped with red sumac.

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