



Angel Wings

A monthly journal for human angels who make a positive difference in companion birds' lives.

January 2012
Volume 7, Issue 1

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HAPPY★NEW★YEAR

Check out all the
[Angel Toys for Angels](#)
now!

ANGEL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Watch for upcoming events, news, website updates,
etc. here



ON THE SITE:

- ♥ [New Items](#)
- ♥ [Spring & Fall Auction Supporters](#)
- ♥ [2011 Project Pictures](#)



Fall Auction Update:

Our Fall 2011 Auction was a great success! We raised much needed funds so we may continue doing what we do best...

Making a difference...
one bird at a time!

THANK YOU!

A heartfelt thank you to all our generous donators:

14 Karat Parrot
Alicia's Creations - Alicia Merritt
Avian Advantage Central - Dee Hayston
Avian Antics Bird Toys - Doug & Shelly Wing
Best Birdy Toys - Steve & Joan Letter
Birds in Hand - Ashley Dietrich

Recycling, Angel Style Decorated Basket

By Wyspur Kallis



Supplies you will need:
Natural Vine Basket (size appropriate)
Zip ties
Plastic drinking straws
Scissors



Cut the plastic straws off at the bend.
Discard bend section.



Cut the long pieces of the straws in half.



Bridget Wagenbach
Bruce & Toni Fortin
Chipper Chirpers Adoption Link, Inc. -
Linda Rolls
Chopper's Toys - Claudia & Chopper
Dancing Parrot & Make Your Own Bird
Toys - Deb White
Gail Armstrong
George & Nancy Goulding
Ilona Peterson
I Love Bird Things - Mimi Grzymala
Jo Marie Ziegler
Kristie Rodgers
Leigh Anne Stewart
Lori & Bob Nelsen
Lynn Edman
MBee Designs - Mary Beth
Noah's Ark Creations - Keona Hunter
Parroteelia Bird Toys - Delta Holder
Phoenix Foraging Rolls, LLC - Lucy
Towbin
PJ Publications & Gifts - Paula
Fitzsimmons
Tri-State Pets Mfg. - Kim Perez
Twin Leather Co. - Rich Castano
Verna & Peter Lucey
Vicki Hartsfield
Wyspur Kallis

To all those that bid...we appreciate your support!



Take approximately 12 straws and bunch them together. Place one zip tie along the side of the straws. With another zip tie, wrap it around the straws and pull tightly. Cut off the long tail.



Take another zip tie and wrap it around the top of the basket, pulling tightly. Cut off the tail.



Spread the plastic straws apart making "flowers" around the entire edge of the basket. You now have a beautifully decorated basket for your feathered loved one to enjoy. This basket can also be used to hold your parrot's favorite toys.



The Elusive Fig Parrot
By Wyspur Kallis



The Fig Parrot isn't your ordinary hookbill. According to Avian Web, the general opinion is that they do not make good companion birds as they are difficult to tame even when hand raised. There are exceptions, such as the Edwards Fig parrot which enthusiasts claim make good companion birds. Fig Parrots are high energy birds, can be very cage aggressive, but do like the companionship of another of their kind.

The Fig Parrot is divided into two families: The Psittaculirostrises and the Cyclopsitta or Oropsittas and the Cyclopsitta / Oropsittas.

The Psittaculirostrises average 7 to 7.9" (18 - 20 cm) in length. This family consists of the following:

- ♥ Desmarest's Fig Parrots / Golden-headed Fig-Parrots or Large Fig-Parrot (*Psittaculirostris desmarestii*)
- ♥ Edwards's Fig-parrot (*Psittaculirostris edwardsii*)

The Cyclopsitta / Oropsittas averages 5 to 7-1/2" in length and consists of the following:

- ♥ Double-eyed Fig-Parrots (*Cyclopsitta diophthalma*)
- ♥ Orange-breasted Fig Parrots (*Cyclopsitta gulelmiterti gulelmiterti*)
- ♥ Salvadori's Fig Parrots / Salvadori's Orange-breasted Fig-Parrots aka Salvadori's Fig Parrot (*Cyclopsitta gulelmiterti fuscifrons*)

In addition, there are many sub species such as Coxens.

The Fig Parrot's diet in the wild consists mainly of figs, but in captivity the diet is similar to Lorikeets and they tend to be just as messy. Most captive Fig parrots will eat anything offered, but figs should certainly be a primary food for them. Seeds, fruits and veggies are suitable for them.

It's best to enjoy fig parrots from a distance where you can watch them eat, climb and spend time in their boxes, which they enjoy using for privacy as well as breeding. Fig parrots generally don't play with toys, but they have a curious nature and require mental stimulation. Foraging toys provide good mental stimulation.

Fig parrots don't need a large space to breed in but prefer an outdoor aviary equipped with a cockatiel box with an enlarged opening.

Indoor cages can be smaller, but keep in mind that these are high-energy birds that like to move and flit about. Fig Parrots typically lay two eggs, which they incubate approximately 28 days.

Since wild-bird imports into the U.S. became illegal in 1993, it's been difficult to locate unrelated fig parrots for breeding. Those you can find often have a very high cost, sometimes as much as \$3500 for a pair. Why would anyone keep a wild, messy cage

bird like this in their home? Seeing these active, feathered green parrots is well worth the effort.

SOURCES:

[Avian Web](#)

[World Parrot Trust](#)



Banana, Butternut Muffins By Toni Fortin

1 cup brown rice flour
1 cup stone ground cornmeal
1 tsp. baking powder (non aluminum)
1 tsp. ground flax
1/2 tsp. cinnamon
2 eggs slightly beaten
2 bananas smashed
1/2 cup plain Greek yogurt
2 large broccoli stalks grated
36 - 1/2" square pieces of butternut squash
(You can buy this already done for you. I found it in a bag in the produce aisle.)

Spray mini muffins cups (36) with cooking spray. Heat oven to 350 degrees. In a medium bowl, stir the first 5 ingredients together. Then add your eggs, bananas, yogurt and grated broccoli stalks. Fill each mini muffin cup 3/4 full and place a piece of butternut squash in the center, pushing down some. Bake at 350 degrees for 17 minutes.
Yield: 36 mini muffins

These muffins freeze well.

My fids went straight for these. As always they say: "I like it, I like it and it's good!"

Rikki Sez

Rikki will try and answer frequently asked questions here.



Rikki, It's the time of year when Mom covers up my carrier with a blanket to take me to get trimmed. I felt a little cold when we got out of the house, but it was better in the car. I peeked out a bit and saw some white stuff all over the place. What is that?

Signed, A Cold Bird in OH

Dear Cold Bird, It's that wonderful time of the year: Winter. What you saw was snow - precipitation that freezes. It sounds like your mom is doing the right thing when she takes you out in the cold. Covering up your carrier and putting you into a warm car is the right thing to do. Once you get in the car, maybe she can uncover a small area so you can see out and look at the pretty snow.



Rikki, I'm so confused and cranky because my sleeping is off. First it was something called Daylight Savings Time and now the days are shorter cuz it's winter. I don't like the constant dark and don't play very well in it. I can't hibernate like a bear! What's a birdie to do?



♥ ♥ ♥



♥ ♥ ♥



A heartfelt THANK YOU goes out to the Central Indiana Cage-Bird Club for their very generous donation! We appreciate your support!



♥ ♥ ♥

Signed, Cranky in TX

Dear Cranky, Your mom needs to get you on a regular schedule with the changing seasons. Also,ask mom to get you some full spectrum lights and some regular lights and put these on a timer (so they go on and off at times that are best for you). She can also buy some toys from PTA (www.parrottoyangels.com) and fill your cage up. Between the lights and new toys, you should be very happy.

♥ ♥

Do you have a question for Rikki? Please send it to The Editor at editor@parrottoyangels.org

♥ ♥ ♥

Color Me Safe
By Kim Perez

We find toys for our birds in many different forums -- bird fairs, pet stores, flea markets, department stores and more. You will notice that, aside from being different in quality, type, and material, they are also different in coloration. Some brands of toys have very bold and bright colors and some are very pale and plain looking.

When we are shopping in pet stores, we all assume that the toys must be safe. If we are assuming that, we assume that whatever they use to color their parts must also be safe.

Water For Our Birds
By Angel Savannah

Water is just water, right? It could seem that way, but it is far from the truth. When it comes to our birds, there could be some types of water that are better for our birds than others.

In the wild, birds drink water from natural water sources such as lakes, streams and rivers. They also obtain water from sources which collect rain water. In African documentaries, we watch the African Greys drinking water out of mud puddles through which elephants have stomped. We watch birds gathered around watering holes where animals bathe. They drink from bird baths which have been shared by hundreds of different birds. These water sources do not

Likewise, we assume when we attend bird fairs that the vendors there are using only bird-safe materials and colorants on their bird toys.

How do we know for sure?

The only way to know for sure if the colorant used on a toy is bird-safe is to contact the company and ask questions. You can ask them what type of coloring they use and if they have MSDS (Material Safety Data Sheets) for those colorants. Most companies will have those available. Smaller manufacturers will be able to tell you what brand of colorant they use and you can then call that company and get their MSDS.

In general, the big companies making bird toys use safe colorants. The small businesses which frequent bird fairs are another set of people. Some of them are very concerned with the health of your bird. Some of them are out to make a quick buck. One of the nice things about bird fairs is that the community of vendors is typically a close-knit group of people. If you have questions about one of the vendors, ask other vendors about them.

For example, there is a lady who takes up five vendor spaces at a local show held monthly. By appearances, an unsuspecting customer would assume that this woman knows what she is doing. She sells a lot of name brand supplies. She also sells a lot of junk toys. She even uses USED bird toy parts to make "new" toys.

There are a couple of colorants I would recommend you not use with your birds. Don't use Kool-Aid as the flavoring may encourage birds to ingest the toy as opposed to just chewing and shredding. In food coloring for human consumption, I have found through assorted companies' MSDS that the red color in particular contains an abundance of lead. This amount is safe for people, but is it too much for a bird? In my opinion, it isn't worth taking the risk. This particular coloring is a blood red. If you notice blood red toy parts, I would either ask what type of dye they use or I

seem terribly sanitary, but the birds don't seem to mind and quite obviously, we do not seek these sources out for our birds!

Many would think that the most sanitary alternative for their bird's drinking water would be distilled water. This could actually be harmful to your birds and is never recommended for their consumption. Distilled water is made by boiling water and collecting the steam produced as a liquid. This is actually the purest form of water. This has a higher level of hydrogen, making it acidic. In order to neutralize any acid consumed by a bird, minerals are drawn from their bones. This can be very harmful to your bird.

Carbonated water is clean and pure, but the carbonation is not safe for our birds.

Vitamin enhanced water seems like it might be good for our birds, but the additives to the water (including flavors, preservatives, vitamins and minerals) are many times unsafe.

Most people provide their birds with tap water. The only thing my vet has said about this is that you may want to switch to bottled drinking water or filtered tap water if you smell chlorine more strongly than usual. This will be the time that your municipality adds chemicals to the water. The smells usually go away within a couple of days, making the water perfectly safe again. For those with water softeners, my vet recommends keeping one faucet in the house that does not get the soft water.

The one water source which has proven to be the most sanitary and still good for your bird is bottled drinking water. This is filtered water with certain minerals added back in. This has no smell and no aftertaste, making it appealing to birds as well.

Bottom line with water is that tap water is safe, filtered tap water is good, but some of the good components can get filtered out. Filtered tap water is good when you have a heavy chlorine smell to the water. Finally, bottled drinking water is good for your bird.



would not buy that toy. Kool-Aid coloring is usually very faded and dull. I also would not buy that toy.



Dirty 12 and Clean 15

By Lori M. Nelsen

The folks at the EWG (Environmental Working Group) released an updated 2011 version of the "Dirty Dozen." This list can be invaluable in evaluating the healthiest choices for your birds and your family. By choosing organic foods, instead of the foods listed on the "Dirty Dozen", you can reduce exposure to pesticides by about 80%.

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Here is your list:

2010 DIRTY DOZEN Buy these organic	2011 DIRTY DOZEN Buy these organic
Apples	Apples
Bell Peppers	Blueberries - domestic
Blueberries	Celery
Celery	Grapes - imported
Cherries	Kale/Collard Greens
Imported Grapes	Lettuce
Kale	Nectarine - imported
Nectarine	Peaches
Peaches	Potatoes
Potatoes	Spinach
Spinach	Strawberries
Strawberries	Sweet Bell Pepper

The new Clean 15 looks like this:

Clean 15
Asparagus
Avocado
Cabbage
Cantaloupe - domestic

Egg Plant
Grapefruit
Kiwi
Mango
Mushrooms
Onions (not for birds)
Pineapple
Sweet Corn
Sweet Peas
Sweet Potato
Watermelon

If consumers feed their birds or families the recommended servings of fruit and vegetables each day from the "Dirty Dozen", as many as 15 pesticides could be ingested each day. If you would feed the produce on the 15 CLEAN list of conventionally-grown produce, the ingested amount would be decreased to 2 pesticides a day.

With the economy in a down turn, purchasing organic might not be a possibility for you. Try staying with the CLEAN 15, washing well with vinegar and water, eat a varied diet. This will keep your birds and family safer and healthier.

To get the wallet sized 2011 Shopper's Guide to Pesticides, go to www.ewg.org/foodnews and download it for free to carry with you. The guide is now available for your Android, iPhone, or iPad. This guide is based on data from 51,000 tests for pesticide residues collected by the US Dept of Agriculture and the FDA.

***All information from www.ewg.org



New Longevity Study By George Goulding

A recent study entitled *Survival on the ark: life-history trends in captive parrots* by A. M. Young, E. A. Hobson, L. Bingaman Lackey and T. F. Wright analyzed a significant number of life-history records of captive birds from the International Species Information System www2.isis.org and calculated lifespan (among other things) for 260 species of parrots. Although the ISIS study related mainly to birds held in captivity in zoos and other institutions, the results of the study should be interesting to everyone with an interest in companion parrots. Notable among the data is the amazing lifespan of 92 years in the case of one Moluccan Cockatoo, but only 11 other species had a maximum life span of over 50 years. Note also that the table shows maximum and median life spans, so the median may be of more interest



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[The Caged Bird Courier](#).

We are here to help, because we care about your bird!!

when thinking about how long your bird may live. Clearly, these results are not meant to apply to all companion parrots, but the results do shed a new light on some of the widely held assumptions about how long our companion parrots might live. To look at the study go to this link and scroll down to see the longevity table:
<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1469-1795.2011.00477.x/full>



Help Us Help the Birds...

Toys Donated: 17,419
Projects Helped: 102

Our Angels generously donate their time making toys for our needy feathered friends. Quality toy-making supplies are expensive and shipping charges are outrageous. That's why we need your support to help keep us going. Every dollar amount, large or small, is gratefully accepted. Donations are tax deductible.

We also welcome donations of toymaking parts and supplies. A receipt will be issued for every donation. Contact us at [Parrot Toy Info](#) for further information on donating.



All donations tax deductible.

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Do you have a question or comment? Perhaps you have an idea for our newsletter, or simply want to share a story on how an Angel has touched your life. Drop us a line at: editor@parrottoyangels.org



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