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Proper Housing/Environment

Choosing a Cage for Your Bird

Try to purchase the biggest cage possible for your bird. At the very least, your bird should be able to extend its wings without touching the sides of the cage. The bars of the cage should be narrow enough that your bird cannot get its head or wings stuck between them. Because some birds like to chew the bars of their cage, the cage material should be strong enough to withstand chewing. It will be helpful for you if the cage is made of a material that is easy to clean. Please avoid cages made of galvanized wire because the zinc that coats the wire can make your bird sick if it chews the bars. You should avoid cages with painted bars for this reason. Powder-coated steel and stainless steel cages are safe for birds, easy to clean, and durable. You can use newspaper to line the bottom of your bird's cage, and you may want to place a wire screen at the bottom of the cage to separate your bird from its droppings. Try to avoid walnut shell and corncob bedding because these can make your bird sick if it ingests them, and these materials can support bacterial and fungal growth.

Toys and Perches

- Placing toys and perches in the cage will provide your bird with opportunities for enrichment and exercise. Too many toys and perches will decrease the free space for your bird, so do not overload the cage. You can place perches of varying diameters at varying heights in the bird's cage. You should not use sandpaper perches because sandpaper can cause sores to develop on the bottoms of your bird's feet. The best perches are natural branches, as long as they have not been treated with any pesticides. Try to place food and water bowls above perches, so the bird is not able to defecate into the bowls.
- When choosing toys for your bird, try to avoid plastic toys that your bird can chew up and potentially swallow. Metal toys are acceptable, as long as they are made of stainless steel. Best for your bird are toys made of natural materials, such as wood and rope, because your bird will probably enjoy chewing them, and they will be safe. When hanging toys in the cage, you should use rope instead of chains to avoid leg and foot injuries. You may want to alter the arrangement of toys and perches, or you may wish to introduce new toys every so often so your bird does not become bored with the setup.

Information cited from:

Mayer, J and Donnelly, T., eds. Clinical Veterinary Advisor: Birds and Exotic
Pets. Elsevier, Philadelphia, PA. 2013. ISBN: 9781-4160-3969-3

Household Items to Avoid

Birds are more sensitive than humans to airborne fumes and toxins, so certain household items that are harmless for us can be very dangerous for birds, causing severe illness or even death. One common household item that can be dangerous to birds is Teflon-coated cookware. When overheated, a chemical reaction leads to the production of fumes that are toxic to birds. Very high levels of these fumes can lead to sudden death, beginning with signs of respiratory difficulty (panting, gasping, etc.) and progressing to neurologic signs (incoordination, inability to stand, etc.). Other items to avoid having around your bird include rug cleaners, air fresheners, incense, candles, hair spray, perfume, and cigarette smoke.

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Information cited from:

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