



CEDAR MOUNTAIN AVIARY

www.cedarmountainaviary.com

Tips for Our New Owners

This page answers some frequently asked questions and gives some tips that will help with the first few days home. For those who have purchased a baby from us, you have life time support, so any questions or concerns you have that are not answered here please give us a call or drop us an email.

Our babies have been weaned to a variety of fresh fruits and cooked vegetables, rice, beans, pasta, potatoes, etc. They have a free choice of a blend made up of large black sunflower seed, peanuts in the shell, shelled almonds*, dried fruit and ZuPreem fruit flavored pellets. About 1/3 seed, 1/3 dried fruit and 1/3 pellets. The dried fruit is human grade and available in large grocery stores, or perhaps health food stores.

You can use anything that you think your bird might like, we use Papaya, Pineapple, Raisins, Banana Chips, Cranberries, Dates, Peaches and Apples. Or for variety maybe Kay Tee Fiesta mix or any other blend that you think he/she might like. Everything in the mix is dry, it will not spoil. For the Cockatoos and Amazons when he/she is fully grown, around 18 months old, you will want to cut back on the fatty seed like sunflower and mix more safflower seed and pellets. The Macaws will require extra fat in their diet all of their lives.

You want to offer a Macaw a large nut like Walnuts and Brazil Nuts in addition to their free choice blend every day. **Please make sure that you always shell almonds.**

The hull of an almond is very stringy and porous, which makes them especially dangerous when found in a commercial blend with pellets and fruit in the mix. The almond hull gathers up tiny pieces of pellet and fruit and then actually tastes like food to a parrot. If they ingest

the hull it will impact in their intestines and kill them. Whenever you purchase a blend that has almonds in the shell you need to go through the entire package and hull the almonds, but also look for small pieces of almond hull that have broken away from the nut.

You want to store the seed outside or at least not in the house, because all seed has Miller moths. Get an infestation of Miller moths in your house and it will take weeks if not months to get it back under control. Bring into the house only what you are going to feed for a few days. If you put smaller amounts in a large freezer zip bag and stick it in the freezer overnight it will kill anything in the seed. If you do get an infestation, put the wedge attachment on your vacuum cleaner and vacuum the edge where the ceiling meets the wall. If you have a textured ceiling it would be a good idea to use your rug attachment and vacuum the entire ceiling. If you get an infestation in your pantry area, vacuum under each shelf and check every package with dry ingredients. The larva of the moth will chew right through packaging and feed on the ingredients inside. It is amazing what they can get into.

Think like a health food nut, if it is good basic nutritious food for you, he/she can have it. Any fresh fruit or vegetable, cooked or fresh. Seven grain bread, French bread, even the edge off your pizza where the cheese cooked hard. Rice, beans, pasta. When you cook spaghetti for dinner, set some of the pasta aside to cool for him/her, anything before the gravies and sauces. Mashed potatoes on a spoon, a chunk of baked potato, even meat. Chicken, beef, well cooked, a little chunk, about once a week. The trick to getting any parrot to eat food other than seed is to know that their taste buds are not on their tongues like ours, they are on the roof of their mouth and the sides of their throat. You will see a parrot lapping at something, they are transferring the taste to their taste buds. If it doesn't taste like anything then they think that it is not food and will throw it out. You need to think about what each food would taste like if you just stuck it on your tongue. Example: A raw carrot, room temperature. If you put your tongue on it, would it taste like anything? No. But if you cooked it and mashed it up a little it would taste like carrot right away. Another example would be a banana. What is ripe to us, is still pretty green to a parrot, so wait until the bananas start to get those little brown dots on the skin and the banana has a very strong flavor and your parrots will dig right in. Another point to make here is that parrots don't eat the skin of anything, that includes corn, peas, grapes, etc. So if you offer anything with a skin, break the skin, or slice up the grapes until your parrot learns that the food is under the skin. Once they recognize the

food you won't have to continue the extra preparation, but if you see them throw something out, think about why they threw it out, don't assume they don't like it, they may not know what it is!

We highly recommend purchasing one of the China Prairie sprouting towers and starting kits. It is easy to do, and the freshly sprouted seeds and grains are an excellent source of vitamins and minerals and all of the parrots eat them well. www.chinaprairie.com

Parrots love variety, so if they gobble up that nice ripe banana don't decide to serve it to them every day. Just like us they will tire of it and it will be a while before they can face another banana.

Stay away from the Nightshade Group, tomatoes, egg plant....

No chocolate, it is lethal. Avocados won't kill them, but it is very high in saturated fat and not good for them, (but then they aren't good for us either!)

When you pick him/her up at the airport, if home is more than just a quick trip, you should take some water to offer. Air flight dehydrates the birds just like it does us. Do not take him/her out of the carrier until you get home. After being in that confined space he/she is going to want to beat his/her wings, and it would be near impossible to get him/her to go back into the carrier. Traveling with him/her loose in the car would be dangerous for him/her and you. Think of the carrier like a child safety seat for your bird, if you had to slam on the brakes or were in an accident, inside the carrier they are safe.

Once you get him/her home, take the carrier somewhere quiet, open the door and let him/her come out on his/her own. As he/she clears the doorway, offer your hand and ask him/her to "step up". He/She is going to beat his/her wings so be prepared to lift him/her out and up or he/she going to beat you in the head with his/her wings. Let him/her beat his/her wings until he/she decides to stop. When he/she does, set him/her down on a perch stand or somewhere he/she can look around and just hang out to get used to his/her new surroundings. This would be a good time to offer him/her some water, if he/she doesn't want it, that's fine. What you don't want to do, would be to force him/her out of the carrier, put him/her in his/her new cage and have the entire family gather around and stare at the new bird. He/She would think he's/she's lunch. Introduce him/her to his/her new family one at a time, never let him/her get surrounded by people, it is too much to keep an eye on at once and he/she will get

very insecure. Talk to him/her. So many times I see people so fascinated with a bird they have just met that they simply stand and stare. Imagine if someone you had never met before, walked up, toe to toe with you, and just stared. Make you real uncomfortable in a hurry, right? The parrots are exactly the same, so talk to him/her, doesn't matter what you say, it will make him/her feel more at ease with you. A parrot's first priority is "Am I Safe?". He/She will bond with you very quickly if you make him/her feel safe, and he/she is going to always look to you to keep him/her safe. Whenever he/she is out of his/her comfort zone he/she will look at you and give a little squawk, tell him/her "It is all right, you're okay".

Right here is where families make the biggest mistake with getting the new baby to trust every member of the family and not just one. I think it is the start of single person bonding and why so many people are convinced that so many parrots are "one person" parrots. First I'll set up the situation and then explain what went wrong...

You bring baby home and have him/her step up from the carrier, you sit down on the couch to get to know the new baby. Baby is happy and feels safe, so he/she has all ready decided that you can be trusted. After a few minutes of this bonding, your spouse walks over to meet the new baby, and baby turns towards this new person towering over him/her, opens his/her mouth and voices some concern. You say "That's okay, lets do introductions later, just leave him/her alone for now and let him/her get used to us." Your parental instinct to protect the baby is perfectly understandable, which is why most comply with the logic, they are concerned for the baby's well being as well. But, what has mistakenly been conveyed to the baby? You made your spouse go away, turning concern into certainty that your spouse can't be trusted. You protected the baby, so now he/she trusts you more and your spouse less. Oops.

Making new introductions should be done at the same level. If you are sitting with baby in your lap, then stand up and have your spouse sit down and hand the baby into the next lap. If there is any voiced concern tell him/her, "It is all right, you're okay" The baby will listen to you, he/she trusts you. Every introduction should be done in the same manner. Every new situation, new person met will build your baby's confidence.

Basic commands are "Step Up", "Step Down". Always use his/her name first, so he/she knows that you are talking to him/her. Praise him/her when he/she does what you ask, he/she is used to hearing

"Good Boy/Girl", "Good Baby Boy/Girl", "Good Boy/Girl (name)." This is key.....these are commands, don't use the sweetest little baby talk voice you can muster, but don't bark at him/her either, use clear precise words and in a normal tone.

To get him/her to step up, make your hand rigid and on edge, touch his/her toes with the back of your index finger at the same you give him/her the verbal command. When he/she moves one foot on to your hand, move your hand up and towards him/her about an inch and stop. Give him/her time to transfer his/her body weight from the perch to your hand. Once he/she is on your hand make sure to keep his/her feet level, if you start to relax your hand he/she will move to the highest level. It is human nature to raise our elbow to keep a bird level and this is a straight path to your shoulder so keep your elbow down. It is an unnatural position and it takes some practice. Don't pull back or be concerned if you baby reaches out with their beak first.

There are three reasons they do this, first, parrots crawl everywhere so they are very used to using their beaks as their first step. They may reach out and test the mount, wanting to make sure that you aren't going to pull away just as they start to step up. Or you may have your hand too high, they will reach out and pull your hand closer to their feet so they can step up.

To have him/her step down, back him/her to the perch, lifting him/her slightly so his/her tail clears the perch, touch the back of his/her feet to the perch at the same time you give the verbal command, (name) "Step Down", he/she will step backwards off your hand onto the perch. Praise him/her for doing what you asked. The reason I train the parrots this way is control. If you hold a parrot in front of a perch they have a straight path to your shoulder, if you back them to the perch and they don't want to step down, then you simply cup their head in the palm of your loose hand and gently push them backwards giving the repeated command, "Step Down", now they have no choice but to step backwards off your hand onto the perch. Praise them for doing what you asked.

He/ She has not been allowed on the shoulder. We believe that carrying your parrot on your shoulder is a personal choice, and it is obnoxious to have a parrot trying desperately to climb your front if you don't want them up there. He/ She has not be allowed on the floor. The floor is a very dangerous place for a parrot, that is where electrical cords can get chewed on, and they may find that space between the refrigerator and the wall and end up tangled in the motor. I'm always

afraid that someone in the house not realizing that the parrot is on the floor is going to come around the corner and drop kick them into a wall.

As soon as you're comfortable with him/her, and he's/she's spent a little time with you.....take him/her for a walk around the house. Take him/her inside every room, and walk him/her up to window so he/she can see out. Talk about each room while you're in there and tell him/her what things are. I know this one might sound a bit strange, but the reason you're doing this accomplishes two things, first it gets you used to talking to him/her, but most important, you are showing him/her your territory, and outside, the limit of your territory. He/She will be able to get a sense of where his/her cage is in your territory. This is important for those times when he/she is sitting in his/her cage alone and hears an unfamiliar noise from the other end of the house. If he's/she's been down there then he/she will have an idea of where it came from, and maybe even what it was that made the noise. If he/she hasn't been down there, it is the "unknown".....he/she will be convinced it is the boogey man, and it is coming for him/her! Which is the same reason I don't recommend that you cover his/her cage at night, by the way. If he/she can just look up and see what is making the noise in the room he/she will just go back to sleep, but if he/she can't see out he/she will sit there very frightened. A night light would be a good idea for the first few nights.

Sleep cages are becoming increasingly popular, and if your baby's new cage is the main part of the house where you spend time well after dark then a sleep cage is something to seriously consider. Your parrot needs a good night's sleep to stay healthy physically and mentally. It doesn't have to be as large as the main cage, since it is only going to be used for sleeping. Our collapsible travel cages could be used as a sleep cage.

While I'm thinking about television, you need to know that the programs that would frighten a child will frighten a baby parrot. So if you're going to watch something that is loud or violent, move your baby parrot out of the room.

Don't overdo it, he's/she's still very much a baby. He/She can easily become over stimulated, he/she still takes a nap in the afternoon, he/she is going to want to check out all his/her new toys, and he/she is still on Central time. If you keep him/her up too late he/she will be crabby just like a human baby would, or handle him/her too much and he/she will get out of sorts, just like a human child would.

If you are going to use a harness with your baby, make sure that you spend a few days handling your new baby first. If you did not purchase a harness from us and have us start the harness training this is even more important. If you haven't purchased a harness yet, please do your homework first. Not all harnesses are made the same, the one that is sold as "Feather Tether" has double steel snaps under each wing. This particular harness is very heavy and could easily damage feathers, but the company refuses to let anyone return them.

Another item that seems to be popular is the diaper. A parrot postures themselves to get their poop as far away from themselves as possible. Asking them to wear a diaper is not only unnatural, it is unsanitary. Another reason is, if they overheat wearing this "suit" it could affect their health. It is easy enough to "poop" train a parrot. My goodness, they are smarter than a dog and most of us would never consider asking our pet dog to wear a diaper.

Whatever the situation, give him/her the same consideration you would an intelligent human child. Physical things, like moving him/her from the house to the car in the winter, bundle him/her or his/her carrier up in something to protect him/her from the cold. When you're going to travel with him/her, in the car, boat, doesn't matter, make sure he/she is not in direct sunlight. He/She will overheat and a bird can't sweat.

Here's one that comes up a lot during the summer...boarding. Or having her stay with family or friends, or even having someone come in to take care of him/her....don't spring it on him/her so that he/she is forced to deal with the changes when you're not there to reassure him/her. If you're going to leave him/her with someone, then take him/her there for a visit, then take him/her there another day and let him/her stay for an hour. Let him/her get used to the idea that when you leave, you are coming back for him/her. Tell him/her good-bye when you leave, even at home, and tell him/her hello when you return. Just think of him/her as this little feathered child. He/She loves you and relies on you for everything. Don't ever forget that every aspect of his/her life is what you make it.

Please know that if you have any questions or concerns, we will always be here for you both.

Vicki & Nancy

