

A JESTER'S TOY BOX

Budgerigars are intelligent, like to be occupied and need variety. So something has to be done to budge them from their parlour bird routine. Experts from the specialist retail chain Maxi Zoo tell bird lovers how they can encourage their budgie's passion for play with toys and sporting gadgets and even become an active player themselves.

Budgies are playful by nature. This playfulness is easily encouraged because the little parrot-like birds are up for just about anything. They love playing in company but are also well able to occupy themselves on their own. Paper and pieces of cartons of all kinds such as empty kitchen paper rolls, egg cartons and cereal boxes can be pulled apart effortlessly and gnawed away at. Unwound toilet rolls are particularly tempting, allowing the little budgie to demonstrate all its powers: the roll will be enthusiastically nibbled, rolled and heaved around then finally even hustled down out of the playground. However, cardboard playthings should always be clean and free from adhesives and metallic parts. Newspaper is not recommended because of the printing ink.

There should also be balls in the toy box. You can get small, light, mesh balls for budgerigars which they can easily grip with their beaks and with which they play



football superbly or carry around in their beaks quite comfortably. These often have a little bell in the centre which makes a tinkling noise when rolled around. In any case, they love everything which jingles and clanks when struck, e.g. wooden toys when they fall loudly to the floor. The sight of it falling and the noise animates them to want to do it again.

Climbing devices combine both play and sport. They will run vigorously up and down the rungs of small wooden ladders. A hemp rope hung from the roof of the cage or the inside aviary, and these talented little gymnasts will even perform daredevil stunts. Also, cotton wool swings, with or without the wooden perch, will tempt them into regular animation or even just hanging from it. If a budgie is still new to you however, the toys could cause more alarm than funny antics. It will have enough on its hands just investigating its surroundings. So wait a little until it has acclimatised and opened its mind to something new.

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C'MON & PLAY!

A bird most enjoys playing when its owner joins in... the two-legged team-mate rolls the ball to it, obediently puts the objects (cube, ball, cardboard tube) chucked onto the floor back where they were or pulls on the end of a string while the little joker tampers with the other end. The more familiar people and animals are with each other, the better the games will be.



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