



ENRICHMENT SQUIRREL STYLE

2024 WRNC Symposium

January 20, 2024

AGENDA

- Why? What? When?
- Discuss Enrichment
- Positive vs Negative Enrichment
- Different Types of Enrichment
- Risk
- Closing
- Questions



EXACTLY WHAT IS ENRICHMENT?



ACCORDING TO
WEBSTER, THE
DEFINITION OF
ENRICHMENT IS:

*"...TO MAKE
THINGS RICH OR
RICHER ESP. BY
THE ADDITION
OR INCREASE OF
THE SAME
DESIRABLE
QUALITY,
ATTRIBUTE, OR
INGREDIENT."*

Sandy Heyn in the NWRA Principles of Wildlife Rehabilitation states:

"Behavioral or environmental enrichment that serves to increase the psychological well being of an animal has become as important as proper diet and veterinary care when dealing with wild animals in captivity."

Agree or Disagree??????



Goals for Enrichment

ASKING WHY?



WHEN *WEBSTER* THINKS ABOUT HAVING A GOAL...HE
THINKS ABOUT "...*THE END TOWARD WHICH EFFORT
IS DIRECTED...*"

When you think about and decide your goal for a group of squirrels what should you take into consideration?



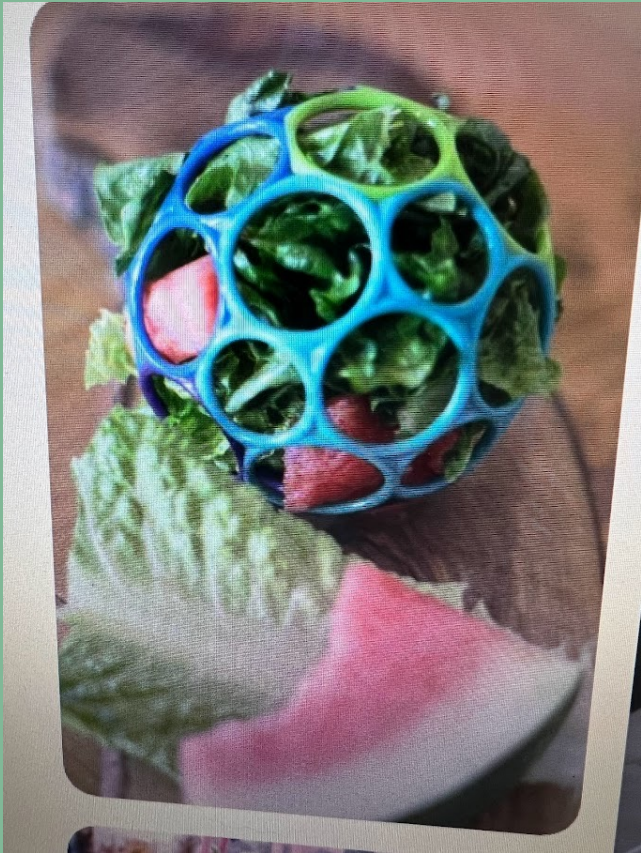
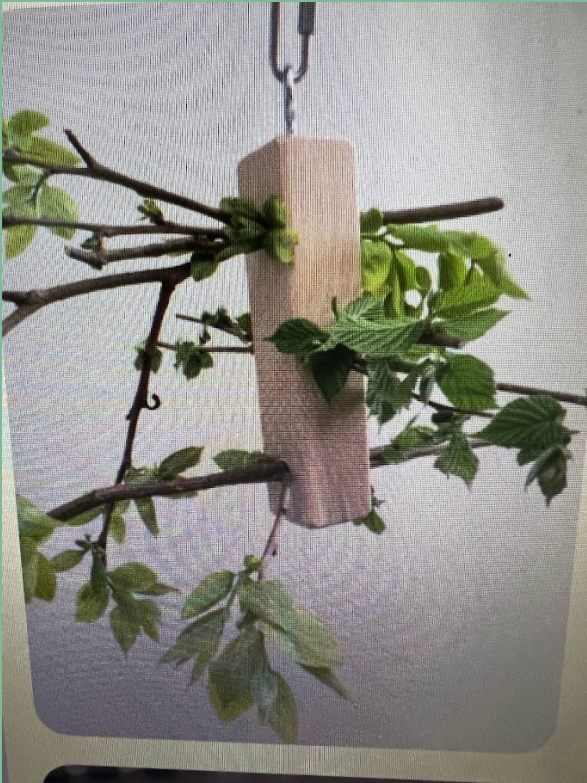
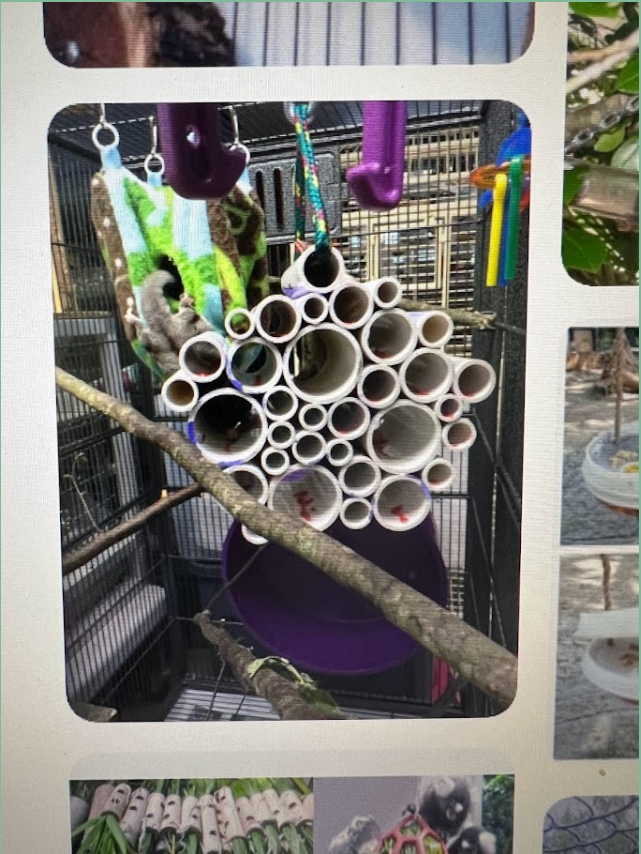
HERE ARE SOME TYPES OF ENRICHMENT





SOME OF THE SIMPLE IDEAS THAT SQUIRRELS LOVE



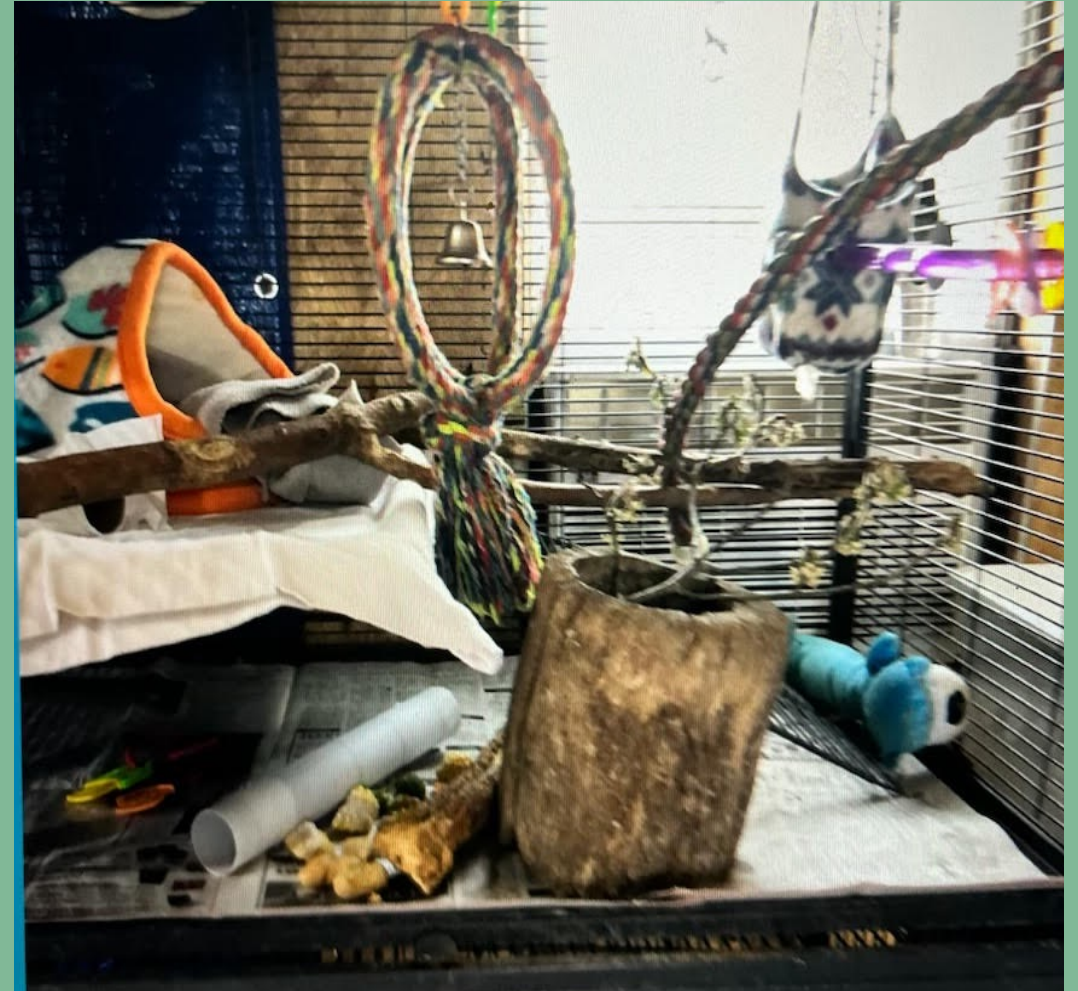


NOW WE ARE GETTING SOMEWHERE!



THIS IS ONE OF MY CAGES THAT I PURPOSELY ADDED EXTRA THINGS TO GIVE YOU IDEAS

This is the top cage of a double
critter nation cage.

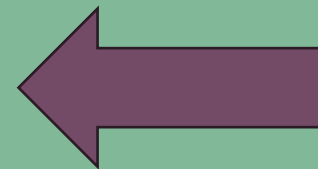


OTHER IDEAS





THIS IS FROM A WILDLIFE CENTER WITH SPACE



What's
wrong with
this set up for
squirrels?





Enrichment is Important for Development



ENRICHMENT FOR SQUIRRELS

As young squirrels grow, it is important to offer some nutrition and entertainment from the outside. Be careful and make sure nothing has been sprayed by chemicals. Here is a list of items that can be used:

Hardwood tree branches; avoid pine	Corn husks and cobs (raw)	Edible flowers (carnations, chrysanthemums, hibiscus, wild rose hips)
Acorns; especially sprouted white oak acorn	Deer antlers or sterile bones to wear down teeth	Offer variety of smells from spices or extracts on a stick
Dead limbs that have lichen	"Forced" tree cuttings in winter	Cut food up in larger or smaller pieces, or smear on sticks
Small fruitwood chew sticks	"Short" roll of toilet paper to shred	Hammock
Tree cuttings with leaf and flower buds in spring	Paper towel tube with nut inside	Hide treat inside another food
Pulled grasses and weeds; dandelion greens	Toilet paper tube with food or treat inside (fold ends shut)	Real hollow logs (if you can find them!)
Immature green pinecones (hit with a hammer to pop open a bit)	Braided fleece rope hung from top of cage	PVC tunnels (T -or L-shaped)
Ripe brown pinecones, slightly crushed underfoot to release seeds	Cardboard boxes	Nesting materials for stuffing a nest box: leaves, grasses, pine straw, live twigs with leaves attached, moss, red cedar bark strips, fleece strips
Magnolia cones with seeds	Cardboard tubes (incl. oatmeal tubs) for tunnels	Tray of dirt, clay, even snow!
	Open window for nature sounds	Old purse with handles/straps that allow it to hang from top of cage. (Watch out for any fraying.)

Courtesy of Tara Bryan, WWI rehabilitator

OUTDOOR CAGE AND RELEASE

When the squirrels are approximately 10-12 weeks old, weigh at least 250 grams, have tails that are thick and bushy, sleek coats, and teeth that are aligned properly, they are ready for a release cage. The youngsters should be moved to their outside cage while they are contained in their nest box. If they are not already using a nest box made of wood, they should be supplied with one at this point. You can stuff the outside nest box with wheat straw for bedding (never do this in an indoor nest box.)

HERE IS A LIST OF THE THINGS THAT I THINK WORK

OLD FABRIC PURSES

WHOLE VEGGIES

POT OF SOIL WITH HIDDEN TREATS

KLINKERBALLS

STUFFED TOYS

SUET FEEDER W/

WADDED UP NEWSPAPER

TREATS

EMPTY TISSUE BOXES

SEASHELLS

DEER SHEDS



AGE MATTERS



What about
enrichment for these
guys?



RISKS OF ENRICHMENT

Enclosures

Diets

Lighting

Sounds

Odors

Items inside cage



Negative Enrichment vs. Positive Enrichment



WHAT DO YOU THINK WOULD BE CONSIDERED NEGATIVE ENRICHMENT?



IS THIS
NEGATIVE OR
POSITIVE

WHY?





Photo contributed by
Victoria Benson

This is an example of
enriching an outdoor
release cage.



VARIOUS CAGES



THE WAY TO GET
STARTED
IS TO QUIT
TALKING AND
BEGIN DOING.

Walt Disney



If you rehabilitate
squirrels this is what you
will find in the
mornings!!!!

