



ENRICHMENT FOR WILDLIFE REHABILITATION PATIENTS

BY: APRIL WEST

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Enrichment for Wildlife Rehabilitation Patients

Our Objective

Education Animals vs. Rehab Animals

What Makes Good Enrichment

Safety First

Successful Enrichment Plans

Conclusion



HOW DO WE PROVIDE ENRICHMENT FOR ANIMALS
IN REHABILITATION, TARGETED FOR RE-RELEASE?

HOW DO WE PROVIDE ENRICHMENT FOR ANIMALS IN REHABILITATION, TARGETED FOR RE-RELEASE?

- Create **pre-approved** enrichment that can be rolled out to our rehab community on designated days
- Create enrichment that is **easily-sourced** and executed
- Create enrichment that is **appropriate** for bobcats, coyotes, opossums, raccoons, skunks, foxes, raptors, bears and more
- Create **complete instructions** for each enrichment that show volunteers/interns or staff what materials they need, as well as how to prep and deliver

EDUCATION ANIMALS VS. REHAB PATIENTS

EDUCATION ANIMALS	vs.	REHABILITATION PATIENTS
Cannot be released		Going back to the wild
Encourage human interaction with socialization		Minimize interaction to avoid habituation
Training		Hazing
Interactive toys can be OK		Encourage natural behavior with natural enrichment

WHAT MAKES GOOD ENRICHMENT?

- Has a purpose / promotes natural behavior of your animal
- Engages the animal for a good length of time
- Resources available or easily (inexpensively) sourced
- Easy to install and feasible for busy days
- Evaluation is key
- Failure is OK!

Good
Enrichment
considers the
following
categories:

1. Social enrichment – other animals
2. Environmental enrichment
3. Dietary enrichment
4. Sensory enrichment – auditory, olfactory, tactile, taste and visual
5. Cognitive enrichment

SAFETY FIRST!

QUESTIONS TO ASK:

- Can any part of the animal get **cut** by, **caught** up in, **hung** up on, or **trapped** inside of the structure or equipment ?
- Can the item **be dropped or fall on** the animal?
- Will the item help the animal to **escape**?
- Are there **enough enrichment objects** to prevent and avoid aggression amongst animals?
- Can enrichment cause gut to be **obstructed** or **impacted** if eaten?
- Is enrichment **non-toxic**?

CAN BE TOXIC FOODS	BOBCAT	CATS	CHICKENS	COYOTE	FOX	GOATS	MOUNTAIN LION	RAPTOR	POSSUM	RACCOON	SHEEP	SKUNK	WOLF DOGS
Acorns											x		
Apple Seeds								x					
Avocado			x		pits	x		x					pits
Cayenne Pepper						x							
Cheese	x	x					x						
Chocolate	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Dog Food	x	x											
Eggplant				x	x	x							x
Fruit Pits								x					
Garlic	x	x		x	x		x	x					x
Grapes	x	x			x		x						x
Macadamia Nuts				x	x					x			x
"Nightshade Vegetables"						x							
Kale/Spinach						x							
Rhubarb/Beets						x							
Nuts (esp. walnuts)				x	x		x						x
Onions	x	x		x	x		x	x					x
Peanuts								x					
Peppers					x	x	x						x
Potatoes			x		x	x	x						x
Raisins	x	x			x		x			x			
Raw Beans			x										
Raw Eggs	x	x					x						
Tomatoes			x		x	x	x						x

SAFE EXTRACTS FOR SCENT ENRICHMENT

Almond
 Banana
 Berry
 Coconut
 Coffee
 Pumpkin (not spiced)
 Vanilla

TOXIC EXTRACTS - DON'T USE

Birch
 Cinnamon
 Lavendar
 Lemon
 Peppermint
 Phenol
 Tea Tree
 Thyme
 Wintergreen

SAFETY FIRST- Sample Toxicity Chart

SUCCESSFUL ENRICHMENT PLANS

NATURE
BOX

SUBSTRATES

FORAGING

SCENTED
STRAW

BROWSE

MEATY
BONES

SHEEP
WOOL

COLORED
EGGS

SUCCESSFUL ENRICHMENT PLANS



Purpose of enrichment



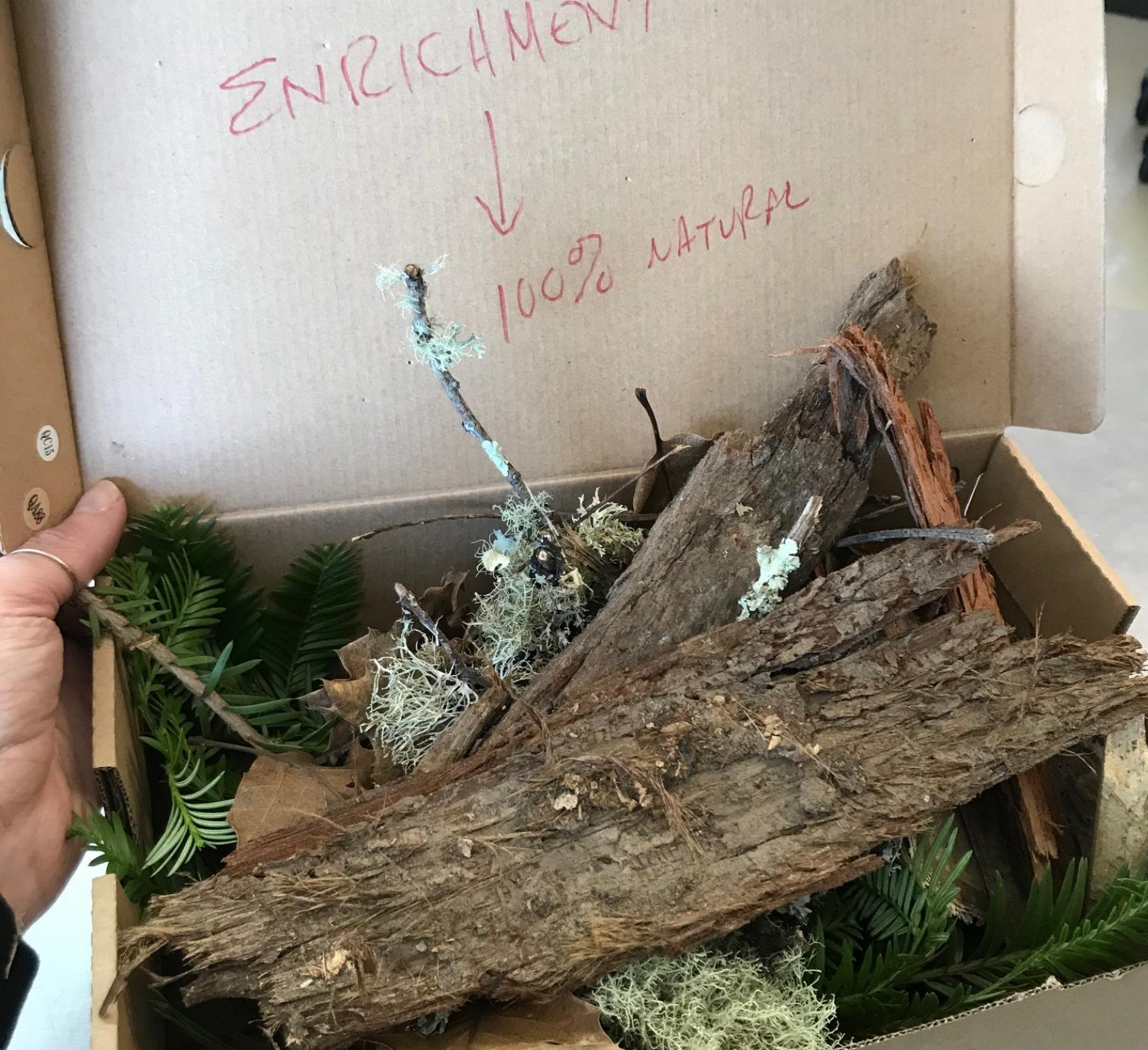
Materials required



Preparation instructions



Delivery instructions



Olfactory/ Tactile Enrichment: NATURE BOX



Olfactory / Tactile Enrichment: NATURE BOX

The purpose of this enrichment is to provide each animal with a supply of natural materials that the animal does not ordinarily have access to. Animals can explore the scents or use for nesting material. Can also tuck in food items to promote foraging. Natural materials include leaves, twigs, bark, grasses, flowers, dandelions, lichen, moss, small rocks, etc. **All items must be vetted for non-toxicity!**

Olfactory / Tactile Enrichment: NATURE BOX

- ▶ MATERIALS & PREP:
- ▶ Shoe boxes (packaging tape / labels removed) or 5-gallon buckets
- ▶ Nature items collected from different properties
- ▶ Volunteers can bring in their own box of nature
- ▶ Identify and research each item to confirm non-toxic for animals prior to delivery
- ▶ DELIVERY:
- ▶ Deliver either a shoebox full of nature items, or dump a 5-gallon bucket full of nature items in a neat pile
- ▶ One box or pile per subject animal, or as appropriate for enclosure

Olfactory / Tactile Enrichment: NATURE BOX



Environmental Enrichment: SUBSTRATES



Environmental Enrichment: SUBSTRATES

The purpose of this enrichment is to provide each animal with a natural substrate that they may not otherwise have access to in their enclosure. For example: if there is plenty of natural grass in an enclosure, we bring in mulch or dry leaves. But if there are plenty of dry leaves or mulch, we bring in fresh grass or fresh leaves. If we use straw for bedding, we bring in shavings, etc.



Environmental Enrichment: SUBSTRATES

MATERIALS NEEDED:

Twigs

Leaf litter

Mulch

Fresh grass

Wood shavings

PREP (ahead of time):

- Gather one gallon bucket of selected material per animal
 - Use something that is not already found in their enclosure and is readily available (e.g., if their enclosure has mulch, use grass; if it's nesting season for a particular bird, use nesting materials like twigs)

DELIVERY:

- Place in a pile on the ground or other surface that will encourage the subject to sniff, roll, etc.
- Can hide food items





Dietary Enrichment: FORAGING



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The purpose of this enrichment is to provide simple challenges to food delivery for each animal to solve.

Dietary Enrichment: FORAGING

- ▶ MATERIALS & PREP:
 - ▶ Cardboard egg carton
 - ▶ Cardboard box
 - ▶ Pinecones
 - ▶ Wooden tray with leaf litter and grubs
 - ▶ Pan of clean straw and live crickets
- ▶ DELIVERY:
 - ▶ Use a portion of daily diet or substitute protein (grubs, crickets) and cut into small pieces that can be stuffed into egg carton, pine cone, boxes, leaf tray or pan of straw



Olfactory Enrichment: SCENTED STRAW



Olfactory Enrichment: SCENTED STRAW

The purpose of this enrichment is to provide a stimulating, unusual scent to each animal's enclosure; using naturally scented straw from either another species, scent spray or perfume.

Olfactory Enrichment: SCENTED STRAW

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Fresh straw
- 5-gallon buckets or equivalent
- Approved scent spray or perfume

PREP (ahead of time):

- Gather one gallon bucket of straw for each subject animal
- Be liberal with application of scent spray

DELIVERY:

- Place in a pile on the ground or other surface that will encourage the subject to sniff, roll, etc.
 - If delivering multiple buckets, create multiple piles



Environmental Enrichment: BROWSE



Environmental Enrichment: BROWSE

The purpose of this enrichment is to provide natural browse materials for visual stimulation, climbing, playing and hiding. Browse can be sized to accommodate hospital patients, nursery patients, and wildlife community patients.





Dietary
Enrichment:
MEATY
BONES



Dietary Enrichment: MEATY BONES

The purpose of this enrichment is to provide each animal with sturdy bone that has remnants of meat to glean. Bones must be whole and size-appropriate for subject animal. Appropriate for carnivores and omnivores.



Dietary Enrichment: MEATY BONES

▶ MATERIALS & PREP:

- ▶ Mixed meaty bones
- ▶ Make sure they are fresh or have been refrigerated; thaw if coming from freezer

▶ DELIVERY:

- ▶ One bone per subject animal, placed in separate locations if more than one per enclosure
- ▶ Collect next day – do not allow to rot
- ▶ *MOUNTAIN LIONS – bones must be whole, intact, and larger than your forearm; or large horse knuckles; clear with staff. Do not feed anything that could splinter.



Olfactory Enrichment: SHEEP WOOL



Olfactory Enrichment: SHEEP WOOL

The purpose of this enrichment is to provide each animal with some of the wool sheared from our resident sheep. The scent of the sheep and the texture of the wool may be stimulating for the animals to interact with.

Olfactory Enrichment: SHEEP WOOL

▶ MATERIALS & PREP:

- ▶ Make sure that the sheep are healthy and free of parasites that could be spread to other animals
- ▶ Make sure to remove any fecal remnants from the wool before placing in another animal enclosure

▶ DELIVERY:

- ▶ Place in a pile on the ground or other surface that will encourage the subject to sniff, roll, etc.
- ▶ Smaller portions can be placed in wicker baskets; or tucked into logs or animal bedding; where subject animal can search and discover.



Dietary Enrichment: COLORED EGGS



Dietary Enrichment: COLORED EGGS

The purpose of this enrichment is to provide each animal with a brightly colored, hard-boiled egg, to provide visual stimulation, as well as the additional calcium and texture of shells, to their dietary intake. Can use any food-safe coloring (easter egg kits, food coloring, or boiled vegetable juice). Appropriate for most species.

Dietary Enrichment: COLORED EGGS

- ▶ MATERIALS & PREP:
 - ▶ One egg per subject animal, hard-hard boiled ahead of time
 - ▶ Dye method of choice
 - ▶ Food coloring
 - ▶ Natural dye
 - ▶ Store bought non-toxic kits
 - ▶ Dye eggs a day or so ahead of time; refrigerate until use
- ▶ DELIVERY:
 - ▶ Incorporate into prescribed diet for each item (i.e., no extra protein)
 - ▶ Hide around enclosure to promote foraging

Dietary Enrichment: COLORED EGGS



In Closing...

- We can provide enrichment for the unique needs of rehab patients using naturalistic materials and simple plans that are easy to source and implement
 - For further information:
aprilawest@earthlink.net
- Thank you for all that you do for wildlife!

