



RSPCA Rat Care Advice

RSPCA COMPANION ANIMALS PET CARE FACTSHEET



FORAGING BEHAVIOUR

FORAGING IS A NATURAL BEHAVIOUR FOR RATS.

ENCOURAGE YOUR RATS TO FORAGE FOR FOOD ITEMS INCLUDING HANDLING AND MANIPULATING THEIR FOOD:

- Give your rats a variety of appropriate food options, so that they have control over their own food choice. This is very important as rats often develop individual preferences for particular foods;
- Mix food items among fresh bedding during cage cleaning and scatter food items around their cage;
- Hide food items in safe places. Rats will happily dig in sand/gravel trays, or chew through cardboard tubes to find hidden favourite food items;
- Occasionally provide seeds (e.g. sunflower), nuts (e.g. peanuts) to allow your rats to manipulate their food in their paws whilst they eat;
- Give your rats whole or intact food to help stimulate them (i.e. working out how to break into a cooled unpeeled boiled egg);
- Always provide food enrichment as part of their daily food allowance, and not in addition to it. Foods high in fat and/or sugar should only be used as occasional treats, or rewards for training, and should not make up their regular food;
- Always provide multiple food objects rather than just one for a group of rats, this will help to avoid competition.



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