

# Bird Safety Corner

## Wood



Bird companions are always looking for ways to add new things to their bird's environment while saving money in the process. One way to do this is to use **natural wood perches** from outdoors rather than buying perches. This is a great way to provide your birds with interesting surfaces to grip along with giving hours of fun ripping bark off.

If you are going to provide natural wood, however, you must take precautions to keep your bird safe. First of all, you need to know which types of wood are safe for parrots. The best way to do this is to consult the following web **resource**, which is comprehensive and frequently updated:

[www.mdvaden.com/bird\\_page.shtml](http://www.mdvaden.com/bird_page.shtml)

Of course you need to know what kind of trees you have around outside before you can tell if they are safe! Once you've passed this step, you need to make sure you do not take branches from any trees or areas which have been **sprayed with pesticides**. Even if you don't use pesticides, your neighbors might, so don't take any wood from **trees on the edges of your property**. Also avoid taking wood from trees **near roads** since chemicals and dirt can splash up onto the trees.

Now that you've identified non-toxic, pesticide-free, and chemical-free wood and cut some perfect-sized pieces for your bird environment, you need to make the wood as safe as you can for your birds. Remember that wild birds and all kinds of other critters stand, sit, and release bodily secretions onto tree branches. You certainly wouldn't want to put those in your cages without cleaning them first! So to **prepare wood for companion bird use**, you must wash all wood in a bleach solution, rinse, and bake in an oven at 250° for one hour. You can't totally sterilize wood, unfortunately, because it is so porous. This is why public health law does not allow wooden chopsticks to be cleaned and reused in Asian restaurants



If you've managed to do all of the above, kudos for doing everything in your power to give your birds healthy, fun, perches for their enjoyment! The website above also has a page showing you **how to prepare the branches with hardware** to make them easy to install in cages.

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