

Living and Raw Foods - Sprouting

Stefanja Dumanowski ... c/o Out of the Blue Eclectus

SPROUTS are simply the freshest most alive food that you can eat.

They are rich in antioxidants, minerals, proteins, enzymes ... all in a form easily assimilated by bodies ... both human and bird.

Dry seeds, by their nature, contain factors that make them difficult to digest. After all, a seed doesn't want to be eaten before it can grow! Soaking and sprouting transforms the seed into the beginnings of a tiny plant and proteins, fats, and carbohydrates begin to break down into a food that is easier for us and our birds to digest and absorb. In the process of soaking and rinsing, the factors that make the seed less digestible are washed away. Each little sprout really is a very fragile life force uninhibited in its compulsion to grow.

Just a word of caution ... large beans including kidney, white, lima, black, fava, pinto and anasazi beans are not suitable for sprouting to eat raw. The only legumes I sprout for my birds are LENTILS of all kinds, MUNG beans, whole DRY PEAS, FENUGREEK, and CHICK PEAS (sometimes). I combine these legumes with other seeds to make a complete 'living' protein. Any other bean that you want to feed your Eclectus/parrot should be first soaked for 12 hours approximately, well rinsed and cooked thoroughly.

Eclectus in the wild forage for food that is living and fresher than the normal foods that we keep in our fridges. This food has a life force. My interest in feeding my Eclectus sprouts as a considerable part of their diet is to 'imitate' some of the qualities of this foraged food in the wild. The rest of their diet is primarily 'raw' fruit and veggies. I only supplement the way I do because my Eclectus have to put up with a northern climate indoors which denies them exposure to natural light, twelve hours a day, all year round and some of the foods I feed (that are limited by availability and bear little resemblance to foods they would eat in their native land) mean that their diets are most likely lacking in essential fatty acids especially omega 3.

The following seeds are excellent sources of omega 3 and I give them (dry) every day: CHIA SEED, HEMP HEARTS (these can be fed together or combined or alternated). FLAX seeds can be fed on an occasional basis, not every day as I have read that it has estrogenic properties. In other words I don't want to give my

eclectus any more excuses for hormonal behaviours! By the way, don't attempt to sprout chia or flax as you will end up with something resembling 'snot'!

RECIPE FOR OUT OF THE BLUE SPROUT MIX (no gluten)

Here is the recipe that I base my sprout mix on. What you don't have, leave out. I have also included alternatives for some items that may be a little more difficult to find. Ingredients that cannot be found in your local health food store, consider ordering from Mumm's in Canada or Sprout People in the US. The ingredients are **organic** and listed in alphabetical order and are **each of equal measure** except where noted:

- * **BUCKWHEAT** (RAW, not toasted)
- * **BROWN RICE** ((short grain, long grain, brown basmati or mixtures ... not white or instant rice)
- * **FENNEL SEED**
- * **FENUGREEK** (a legume - if you can't get this one substitute lentils)
- * **GREEN LENTILS**
- * **MUNG BEANS**
- * **GREEN PEAS**
- * **QUINOA** (I most often double the amount of quinoa)
- * **RADISH SEEDS**
- * **RED CLOVER**
- * **BROWN SESAME SEEDS**
- * **SUNFLOWER SEEDS** (without shells)
- * **SUNFLOWER SEEDS** (with shells)

Here is a list of additions you might make to the above basic ingredients:

- * **KAMUT** (an ancient wheat and a gluten grain). I sometimes add it for variety for healthy Eclectus

* **OTHER VARIETIES OF LENTILS** (additional to the green above or to substitute)

* **BROCCOLI SEEDS OR BRASSICA MIX**

If you are reluctant to make your own mix, the following companies sell mixes. <http://www.chinaprairie.com/afd.html>. The Micro Grain is a good one. The Sprout People have the best information on the internet to guide you in sprouting ... and this company <http://www.sproutpeople.net/> also has some excellent sprout mixes for humans and for birds, as well as individual ingredients to make your own.

Here is a guide to help you decide What to Sprout - Or Not!

DON'T SPROUT: Amaranth is a very nutritious grain, however the raw hard grain has been shown to cause liver damage in chickens. While there is no information linking it to parrots specifically, it's wise to err on the side of caution and not feed amaranth in its dry form (info from Gabriel Foundation). I personally don't sprout amaranth but like to soak it with equal parts MILLET, BUCKWHEAT and QUINOA overnight, drain, rinse, drain, just cover with filtered water and cook about 10 minutes until all water is absorbed.

DON'T SPROUT: There is some controversy about sprouting alfalfa. If you do sprout this seed you want to make sure you grow it so that it looks like the sprouts you see in stores. The un sprouted seed contains the toxin canavanine (info from Gabriel Foundation). The organic green powder form of Alfalfa ,dehydrated from the green of the plant grown in the earth, may be superior to alfalfa sprouts in nutrition. Alfalfa plants have extremely deep roots so they mine the earth for nutrients which are then expressed in their foliage. That nutrient density would not occur in the sprouts grown in containers. I often use alfalfa powder as an excellent mineral supplement especially in the presence of calcium/magnesium/vita D3 supplementation.

DON'T SPROUT: Large beans: Anasazi, Black, Kidney, Lima, Navy, Pinto and Soy are not suggested for sprouting for parrots. These legumes may cause toxicity and are difficult to digest. If you choose to serve these to your bird they MUST be soaked for a minimum of 8 hours, well drained and beans rinsed very well, then cooked by bringing them to a full boil, boiling uncovered for 10 minutes, covered and simmered for another 20 minutes at least (info from Gabriel Foundation). Beyond what I sprout, I personally do not feed any cooked beans to my parrots, no matter how they are prepared and cooked.

‘SPROUTS’ GENERAL:

The sprout mix (seeds should be organic and raw - avoid anything that is GMO, roasted, processed, or separated from its whole form if you are making your own mixes) should contain proportionally 1 part legumes in the form of lentils, mung beans and/or whole (dried) peas to 3 or 4 parts other seeds and pseudo grains like quinoa. Generally, I do not use any seed in the sprout mix that contains gluten.

With a complement of legumes and seeds the sprout mix provides a complete vegetable protein. Other than breeding and weaning babies, the fat content is also at a minimum as I generally feed oil seeds and other healthy fats separately to control amounts in individual diets here at Out of the Blue Eclectus.

- * For those of you starting out with sprouting for your flock, you may want to **sprout individual seeds**. With my eclectus parents and their babies I use the **Out of the Blue Sprout Mix**, as well as a simple one made of :
- * equal parts **MUNG BEANS or LENTILS, and SUNFLOWER SEEDS** (without hulls). This one is soaked and sprouted the same way as described.

I also soak for 24 hours, and then drain, rinse and drain, raw, organic **ALMONDS**. Treated this way, the almond becomes a nice crunchy treat. For my eclectus, almonds are limited to one per day each and are a treasured treat.

GROWING SPROUTS:

A measure of dry sprout mix is placed into a bowl and washed thoroughly until the water is clear. If you like you can spray drained mix with 3.5% Hydrogen Peroxide, let sit a few minutes and rinse one final time before soaking.

Drained seeds are placed into an EZ Sprouter, or a wide mouth sealer jar with mesh top (depending on what you are using), and the container is nearly filled with room temperature reverse osmosis water (or filtered water). Keep in mind that it is during soaking that the seeds absorb the water which should be as pure as possible with no additives. Soaking is a minimum of 8 hours, most usually 12. At end of soaking, seeds are well rinsed and drained and sprouting started. My containers are in the kitchen on the counter out of direct sunlight. The seeds are rinsed and drained usually twice per day after this. The directions for sprouting are followed until the legumes have a rootlet poking out. This usually takes 24 to 36 hours of sprouting. At the end of that time I place the sprouted seeds into a bowl, and rinse again very well. The well drained sprouts are then placed in the fridge and I

usually have enough for 3 to 4 days. Just prior to using the last serving of the batch, I start a fresh batch.

I have never had any mould or souring of sprouts when following these directions and even the ones kept in the fridge do not again need to be rinsed before serving. However, always look at, smell and taste your sprouts before giving to your Eclectus/parrots. Any doubts ... compost and start again.

