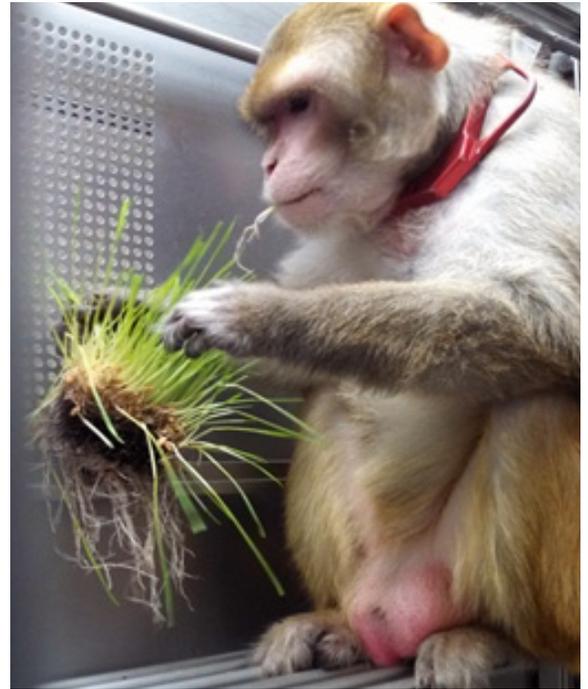


Novel Enrichment Item for Non-Human Primates

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Enrichment is a critical component of any animal care and use program, especially in regards to non-human primates. It is also a requirement based on the USDA Animal Welfare Act and the *ILAR Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals*. Providing enrichment that stimulates multiple senses can be challenging, especially when working with sedentary animals that are prone to excessive weight gain. In order to provide more varied enrichment items to our primates, the Veterinary Services staff at our facility reached out to the laboratory animal community and asked for recommendations of enrichment items that would stimulate multiple senses and were lower in calories. The veterinary staff at the University of Wisconsin-Madison suggested growing wheat grass, as their primates enjoyed this as an enrichment item.

Wheat grass kits are available from multiple sources (e.g. wheatgrasskits.com)

and usually come with enough seeds and other materials to grow 5 flats. The instructions are very simple and the grass grows quickly, only taking about a week to reach harvesting height. Our veterinary staff then takes the grass, cuts it into squares, and passes them out to all of the primates. The primates enjoy breaking the dirt apart, foraging through the grass, and taking some nibbles here and there. Our facility currently houses rhesus and cynomolgus macaques and both of these species enjoy utilizing the wheat grass. The pictures show the wheat grass prior to cutting, once it is cut into squares, and one of our rhesus macaques enjoying his grass. The primates do a very good job breaking the dirt and roots up into small pieces so it has never been a problem in cleaning the rooms or with the drains. Overall, this has provided a novel enrichment item that stimulates foraging behavior and is low in calories.