



Mini-Golf Puzzle Feeder

Adapted from instructions submitted for the Hose2Habitat Enrichment Contest 2015, and permission for use and publication granted, by the Houston Zoo, Houston, TX



General Description: The device is attached to the side of the enclosure with the open end of the PVC resting against the mesh. Treats that will slide down the PVC are placed around the top shelf of the rolly cart. A hole is drilled in the top shelf of the device and PVC pipes are attached beneath the hole so that any treat pushed through the hole will fall into the PVC and roll into the enclosure with the animal. More than one hole and PVC elbow and straight piece “slide” can be put on the device for the same or different sized treats.

Animals are given a bamboo stick (bamboo sticks and other browse may be regularly dispersed throughout the animal enclosure for the animals to find) that the animals can use to push the treats into the hole to obtain treat. Scattering various size and types of browse throughout area adds a greater challenge and allows animals to choose and modify sticks to suit their purpose. Great apes modify sticks and branches to help them obtain food in the wild. This encourages problem solving and tool modification behaviors.



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Species: Chimpanzees, Orangutans, Gorillas

Safety Concerns: Additional food sources may be needed to avoid group conflict over food. Most of the device is out of reach of animals, but be sure any attachment device is suitable for the animal it is being used with and that there are no loose or nearby items that the animal should not have access to that can be obtained with the same tool the animal will use with this device.

Mini-Golf Puzzle Feeder Instructions

Items Needed:

Cart (or similar box, container, or base that can be used in the same way)

Drill with bit to make a hole

PVC elbow (diameter same or slightly larger than PVC straight piece)

PVC straight piece (diameter that allows treats to slide through; length depends on distance required)

Zip ties (or other method of stabilizing PVC pipe)

Carabiners (or other method of attaching cart or box to side of enclosure)

Step 1. Drill hole in top of cart (or other device being used as base). Hole should be big enough to accommodate the treats that will be used. Smaller holes are more challenging.

Step 2. Attach straight PVC piece to PVC elbow piece and position the PVC elbow opening under hole as shown in photo.

Step 3. Attach the PVC to the cart or other device being used as a base. A second small piece of PVC can be used on the front of the cart to stabilize the PVC that is being used for treat transport, as shown in photo.

Step 4. Attach the cart or other device being used as a base to the side of the enclosure so that it does move away from animals while in use.