

Horticulture Information

Conserving Plants

- At the heart of Woodland Park Zoo's mission is to help conserve plants and animals.
- More than 30,000 species of plants in the world are now threatened with extinction.
- Woodland Park Zoo displays 18 species of endangered plants, including 12 species of orchids and six species of pitcher plants.
- Several active plant conservation projects are planned for the near future.

African Savanna

- Most of the award-winning African Savanna plants cannot be grown outdoors in Seattle because of Northwest winters, so the zoo has planted trees, shrubs and grasses to represent the look and feel of such plants.
- Many plants on the zoo's African Savanna, like those in Africa, have developed adaptations to prevent water loss. The thorny elaeagnus and silk-tassle bush have a thick, waxy cuticle to minimize water loss through the leaf surface. Also, the Russian olive trees and autumn berry reflect the sun with their light-colored leaves.
- Trees like the black locust, which substitutes for acacia trees on the zoo's African Savanna, have thorns to minimize being eaten.
- Several plants that would be found around watering holes in Africa have been added to give the exhibit a lush, exotic feel. Plants such as the staghorn sumac with its compound leaves, the tall bamboo-looking giant reed which can grow up to 18 feet tall, water canna and manna grass all help add a look of authenticity to the exhibit.

Tropical Rain Forest

- Many plants of economic value are featured in the zoo's award-winning Tropical Rain Forest exhibit, including plants such as chocolate, coffee, black pepper, vanilla, tapioca, ginger, mahogany and the Panama hat plant.
- Orchids, the largest plant family on the planet with over 25,000 species, are displayed throughout the Tropical Rain Forest exhibit.
- Many species of ferns are featured as well, like the staghorn fern, which has wide, leathery fronds that often branch out to look like deer antlers.
- The *Vanda coerulea*, the beautiful blue orchid from Burma and Thailand, along with several species of endangered tropical pitcher plants, can be found in the zoo's Tropical Rain Forest.
- Jaguar Cove contains more than 1,500 plants, including trees, shrubs, vines and ground covers, both inside and outside the jaguar enclosure.

Tropical Asia

- Most of Woodland Park Zoo's impressive bamboo collection can be found in the award-winning Tropical Asia exhibit. More than 40 species, both temperate and tropical, are grown in the exhibits and surrounding areas.
- Clumps of bamboo help to create a sense of immersion into natural habitats by screening off one exhibit from another.
- Even though tropical plants can't be grown outdoors in Seattle, the zoo has recreated a tropical Asian forest by using temperate plants. This is accomplished by incorporating the ecological elements of a tropical forest including layering of the forest, leaf shape and level of diversity.

Northern Trail

- The goal in planting the zoo's award-winning Northern Trail exhibit was to use species native to the boreal forests of Alaska.
- Visitors can walk through a closed forest of white spruce with clumps of paper birch trees, a grove of quaking aspen, a black spruce community, a paper birch/white spruce/poplar forest and a coastal forest.



Northern Trail cont.

- Alaska yellow cedar, located in the coastal forest, exhibits an unusual growth habit to deal with heavy snow: the foliage of these trees hangs perpendicular to the ground to shed the load!
- The land of the midnight sun produces an awesome variety of long-lasting flowers. During the summer zoo visitors can see prickly rose, shrubby yellow-flowered cinquefoil, mountain cranberries, twinflower, blue lupine, white foamflower, soapberries, Saskatoon serviceberries, and Alaska's state flower, blue forget-me-not.
- The zoo's shrub tundra, located near the Tundra Center, sports two dwarf arctic birch trees and a small variety of willows.

Temperate Forest

- On the path leading toward the zoo's water tower, visitors can observe native species of plants that produce nectar and food for wildlife, such as serviceberry and Indian plum.
- The western red cedar, Douglas fir and western hemlock, along with shrubs and ground cover, provide natural cover for wildlife.
- The Family Farm features a butterfly garden with host plants to attract native butterflies.
- A vegetable garden demonstrates the benefits of using the highly coveted, exclusive Woodland Park Zoo Doo compost.
- The garden includes apple trees, hybrids of dwarf apple trees and regular apple trees. This variety allows farmers to grow more apples using less space.

Woodland Park Rose Garden

- The 2.5-acre garden displays 260 varieties of roses and 5,000 individual rose bushes embellished by a lily pond and gazebo. Types of roses include: hybrid teas, floribundas, grandifloras, miniatures, climbers, landscape and tree roses. Peak time is July.
- In 1996, Woodland Park's Rose Garden won the All-America Rose Selections (AARS) award for outstanding maintenance.
- In 1995, Woodland Park's Rose Garden was voted outstanding rose garden in the U.S. by AARS.

Outstanding Trees

- More than 5,000 trees of 200 separate species grow throughout the exhibits and open spaces in Woodland Park Zoo.
- An important component in the redevelopment of the zoo is the special effort to preserve trees.
- The zoo's mountain ash, which is a champion in North America, sweet birch, black cherry, Shirotae or Mt. Fuji cherry, Sargent crab apple and chinquapin oak are all on Washington state's Big Tree list.

Feigning Foreign Flora

- By approximating their native habitats, animals respond by exhibiting more natural behaviors.
- Exotic plant shapes, leaf sizes and landscape compositions unfamiliar to the eye are the most effective way to make zoo visitors and animals feel as if they have left the Northwest environment.
- The use of several hardy species of vines and plants with very large leaves, and a conscious effort to reduce the appearance of patterns, create the look and feel of the tropics.