

RIVERBANKS

March – April 2009



RIVERBANKS ZOO AND GARDEN

Volume XXVIII, Number 2

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Riverbanks Hours of Operation

Open daily except Thanksgiving day & Christmas day
9am – 5pm Daily
9am – 6pm Weekends during Daylight Savings

Subscriptions to *Riverbanks* are \$24 per year. Members of Riverbanks Society are entitled to one free subscription along with free admission and guest passes, discounts at Zoo & Garden gift shops, invitations to special events and much more. To subscribe to *Riverbanks* or to join the Society, visit www.riverbanks.org or call 803.779.8717 x1111.

Riverbanks Magazine

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Front cover: Grevy's Zebra
Photograph by Anna Parkinson



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**ASSOCIATION
OF ZOOS &
AQUARIUMS**

Riverbanks Zoo & Garden is accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums and a member of the American Public Gardens Association.

THE OBSERVATION DECK

For those of you looking for a fun or unique springtime experience, look no further than Riverbanks Botanical Garden. While our Garden has grown—literally—since opening in 1995, it has also blossomed in the area of programs and events. Consider for a moment the range of activities scheduled for the coming months:



- ◆ **March 21st - Springtime at the Garden Festival**
Get in the gardening mood with Riverbanks' second annual gardening festival. This daylong family event will feature specialized gardening demonstrations, more than 20 vendors displaying everything from herbal soaps to garden tools, art and activities for the kids and a variety of experts from local businesses. There will even be a container design competition between Columbia's best garden centers with plants grown in the Great Zone 8, right here in the Midlands of South Carolina. Homeowners looking for new landscaping ideas are sure to get inspired. Plus, local band Woodwork Roadshow will be playing acoustic rock and bluegrass live in the amphitheater. I can't think of a better way to celebrate spring.
- ◆ **April 9th - Southern Living garden lecture**
Come hear *Southern Living* garden editor and South Carolina native Rebecca Bull Reed talk about creative kitchen gardens. Rebecca will conduct a cooking demonstration, with tasty samples, following her lecture. Once you're inspired by Rebecca's words—and cooking, you can purchase a few of Riverbanks' own kitchen garden plants.

◆ **April 24th - Wine Tasting at Riverbanks Botanical Garden**
Enjoy the Botanical Garden after-hours while sampling fine wines. This is one of the best "date nights" for adults in Columbia. Guests can listen to live jazz, nibble on hors d'oeuvres and consult with the experts to find the perfect wine for their palate—all in one of the nation's most exquisite botanical gardens.

◆ **April 25th - Botanical Garden plant sale**
Spruce up your yard with plants from Riverbanks Botanical Garden. This is, without question, Columbia's most popular plant sale, featuring more than 60 species of hard-to-find plants. The sale starts at 9am and ends at noon. Plan to come early with your own wagon because experienced plant sale participants know that the early bird does indeed catch all of the best plants.

◆ **Thursdays in May - Rhythm and Blooms**
Maybe the Midlands' best kept secret, Rhythm and Blooms is an inexpensive but highly entertaining and relaxing evening in the Botanical Garden. Rhythm and Blooms features a different live band each week, numerous vendors featuring local artists and gardening demonstrations by the Clemson Extension Master Gardeners and Riverbanks Garden staff. Tapas and drinks (including beer and wine) are available for purchase.

I encourage you to try each of these wonderful events. I promise, you will not be disappointed.

Satch Kwantz

◆◆◆ Plan Your Gifts ◆◆◆

Many of you will make a gift to charity this year, and we ask that you consider making that investment in Riverbanks Zoo and Garden. Through a planned gift, you help to guarantee that future generations will enjoy the magnificent animals and plants at Riverbanks, while helping accomplish your own

goals of future financial security or disbursement of your estate. Planned gifts may include gifts of cash, stock or securities, life insurance or IRAs, trusts or bequests. Should you have any questions regarding the advantages of planned giving, please feel free to call 803.779.8717 x1101.

MISSION STATEMENT

It is our mission to foster appreciation and concern for all living things.

We are dedicated to providing:

- ◆ the highest standards of care for our animal and plant collections.
- ◆ a diverse educational and high-quality recreational experience for all Riverbanks visitors.
- ◆ all the resources at our disposal for the conservation of the earth's flora and fauna.

A photograph of two baboons standing on a concrete ledge. The baboon on the left is looking towards the left, while the one on the right is looking towards the right. They are both looking towards the camera. The background shows a wooden structure with ropes and a dirt ground.

2009 Captivating Creature Awards

Celebrating 35 Years of Extraordinary Animals at Riverbanks

With remarks by the Senior Animal Staff:
John Davis, Scott Pfaff, Jennifer Rawlings and Martin Vince

MOST COOPERATIVE

Nobody likes to get shots. But some people—and animals—have to get them to survive. In 1996, Baines the Hamadryas baboon was diagnosed with diabetes after a routine preventive health exam. Interestingly, primates with diabetes undergo the same treatment as diabetic humans, with daily blood monitoring and insulin injections—not an easy feat to accomplish for a young and energetic baboon. However, Baines learned to accept his treatment after much hard work

and dedication with the animal care staff. That was 11 years ago. Since then he has never refused a treatment and fully cooperates daily while his keepers collect blood samples and inject him with insulin. Baines has even been given the opportunity to demonstrate this exemplary behavior during special tours for children with diabetes. Of course, his cooperation results in a reward. Sugar-free candy is one of his favorites!



MOST MALIGNED

The reptile with the worst and least deserved bad reputation is probably the cottonmouth, a.k.a. water moccasin. This denizen of dank, moss-draped swamps is one of the South's most infamous snakes. Cottonmouths are fairly large semi-aquatic pit vipers that get their common name from the habit of opening their mouths and exposing the pinkish white interior towards would-be assailants. Cottonmouths have a reputation for being aggressively violent, falling out of trees into passing boats, attacking fisherman and aggregating in huge numbers below the rope swing at some local swimming hole, usually in a rock quarry. But nothing could be further from the truth. Research conducted by the University of Georgia's Savannah River Ecology Laboratory (SREL) has proven that cottonmouths are unusually tolerant for a venomous snake. Clad in snake-proof boots, scientists at SREL tested the wild cottonmouth's level of aggression by standing directly beside a snake and placing one foot lightly on top of it. After that, they picked up the snake with gloved mechanical hands. None of these actions elicited a defensive strike from the cottonmouth until they squeezed its body with artificial hands. Then the cottonmouth bit in self defense, proving that you can't hug a cottonmouth with mechanical arms. But even the most avid snake-hater has to admit that anyone who picks up and squeezes a cottonmouth is really asking for it.



MOST LIKELY TO CAUSE THE WILLIES

This strange, yet prestigious, award goes to the deep sea isopod. A relative of the terrestrial pill bug (roly poly), this giant of the deep is the largest species of isopod in the world and is found at ocean depths exceeding 1200 meters. Some of the newest residents at Riverbanks, two isopods are currently on display in the ARC. They move slowly and rarely eat because of the extremely cold water in which they live. This distinctive honor is bestowed upon them because they look like they should be from outer space rather than the ocean.



MOST HELPFUL

This award goes to the blue cleaner wrasse. In the wild, this diminutive blue-streaked fish feeds exclusively on the parasites found on the skin of other fish. At home in the Indo-Pacific coral reef tank in the ARC, Riverbanks' cleaner wrasse has essentially the same job. This fish can be found removing stray parasites and excess skin cells from its tank-mates. The wrasse will even set up "stations" where the fish will line up and wait for their turn to be cleaned. Normally, a fish as small as the cleaner wrasse would quickly become lunch for a larger fish; but its tank-mates obviously appreciate its accommodating nature.



MOST RESOURCEFUL

“Houdini” the Harris hawk—famous for his daily appearances in the Amazing Animal Show—wins this one hands down. The judges took no time to decide this award. Houdini is the only bird in the collection who can feed himself! Each day he receives his daily diet, which is carefully balanced for quantity and nutritional content. However, periodically, we discover that he captures his own food in the form of a mouse or two, or three, that wander through his enclosure at night. Of course “resourceful” isn’t quite the right word—he’s just doing what comes naturally. But by our definition of the word, the award is deservedly given to Houdini for his extracurricular feeding abilities.

WORST NAME

One of the worst names for an amphibian has to be hellbender. Riverbanks’ herp experts aren’t sure what hellbender is supposed to mean, but they’re certain it can’t be good. Hellbenders are gigantic, totally aquatic stream-dwelling salamanders with small beady eyes (no eyelids), depressed bodies, flattened heads and conspicuous folds of loose skin. They can weigh as much as three pounds and approach three feet in length. (Their only close cousins, the Chinese and Japanese giant salamanders, can weigh as much as 100 pounds!) Hellbenders do look kind of creepy, sort of like aliens from a dark, low-gravity planet, but since early European naturalists didn’t yet know about aliens, they had to evoke Dante for a vernacular name. Hellbenders also produce copious quantities of very slimy skin secretions that are noxious to predators, which gives rise to their other and even more unpalatable common name—snot otter. Certainly the grossest label of any salamander! Fortunately, herpetologists usually refer to animals by their scientific name, in this case, *Cryptobranchus*. Hellbenders can be seen in the ARC’s South Carolina Gallery.





MOST VOCAL

The award for the most vocal bird is a close-run race, between the red-legged seriema and the Raggiana bird of paradise. The most ear-piercing sound is produced by the red-legged seriema; the sound is designed to traverse the savannas of South America, and probably capable of popping a wine glass at 50 paces. The bird of paradise, on the other hand, produces a cackling sound that would make the wickedest of witches so

proud. Although not loud, it is certifiably “blood-curdling” and tends to be produced when the males are displaying to each other—competing for the females’ attentions—while swinging wildly upside down. So, the winner is: the red-legged seriema. After much deliberation, and eating a good deal of snacks, the judges felt that the ability to pop a glass was more impressive than the ability to curdle blood. It’s debatable. But the judges’ decision is always final.

MOST RECOGNIZABLE

The distinctive stripes of a zebra make it perhaps the most recognizable animal at the Zoo. Its perfect arrangement of alternating black and white bands, defined with great precision, make the zebra a true masterpiece of nature. You may find that the zebra is often difficult to stare at, and the pattern may appear to be moving. This cryptic coloration or camouflage is believed by many to be what protects a zebra from predators. A large herd of zebras standing or moving close together may appear as one large animal. It may also make it more difficult for a predator such as a lion to single out an individual when the confusing cluster of stripes runs in all different directions.



Can You Teach A Dinosaur New Tricks?

By Scott Pfaff
Curator of Herpetology

Grace Olive Wiley was a woman ahead of her times. In the 1930s, she was the curator of reptiles at the Brookfield Zoo—a position that, seventy years ago, was certainly considered a man's domain. Grace was of the opinion that venomous snakes could be tamed and handled, which she frequently did, much to the consternation of the more safety-conscious zoo administration. After she retired from the zoo, Grace maintained a huge personal collection of reptiles including many venomous snakes and crocodylians. Sadly, she died in 1948 after being bitten by a recently acquired Indian cobra that had not yet been “tamed.” She was also, apparently, a pioneer in the training of reptiles. Many years ago, I read an old magazine article written by a reporter who had visited Grace at her home shortly before she died. The reporter recounted sitting in her home surrounded by caimans and alligators lying on the living room floor. Grace, at that time 65 years old, told the reporter that each individual croc knew its own name and would respond when called. Challenged by the reporter, Grace would call a particular crocodylian's name and it would respond by getting up and walking over to her, much like a dog. I have to admit that for many years I never believed that tale. I did believe that reptiles could be acclimated to human contact and “tamed” much like Grace's venomous snakes, but I also believed that reptiles were too different, too

basal, to respond to traditional training techniques commonly used for dogs. My, how times have changed.

These days, training—or operant conditioning—is becoming ever more common in reptiles and even amphibians. Amongst reptiles or reptile-like creatures (crocodylians are now considered to be separate from true reptiles and more closely related to dinosaurs), crocodylians respond particularly well to training despite the fact that they have a brain the size of a walnut, and a rather small walnut at that.

We have discovered that even though crocodylians can be trained to respond to commands, training them can be very different than the more familiar mammals. For one thing, we are also mammals, and relating to a pet dog or cat and trying to ascertain how it feels or thinks is far easier than trying to get into the mind of a crocodile—or worse, a seemingly unfathomable snake. Ectothermic crocodylians and reptiles have a slower stimulus response rate than high energy, rapid-fire mammals, and that can complicate training. A trainer can give a croc a command, and the animal may well intend to respond to it but will do so on reptile time, which can be agonizingly slow. Also, food is often the reward given to an animal during the training process, and reptiles—with their slow metabolisms—have a much reduced need to take

in food. Crocodylians typically are fed once or twice per week, snakes as little as once per month. We compensate for this some by feeding smaller meals more frequently; nevertheless, the frequency and duration of the training sessions is still far less than for a bird or mammal.

So why would we want to train crocodylians? What is the benefit for them or for us as animal managers? We originally wanted to train our two 500-pound alligators to gain a measure of orderliness. Feeding time for them was a free-for-all with each animal trying to get the most food. The gators were always waiting for the keepers at the gate and, with safety a major concern, the first behavior we taught them was to go to



months of winter dormancy? The answer was yes. As soon as the weather warmed up and we could feed the alligators again, they responded to their commands as if they had only been asleep overnight.

We have now expanded our training program to also include false gharial crocodiles, dwarf caimans, king cobras and yellow monitors. These training sessions can frequently be observed by Zoo visitors year-round in the Aquarium Reptile Complex and at the alligator exhibit from mid-April until early October. It has been an enriching experience for both the animals and the staff—and interesting for our patrons, who sometimes watch with disbelief as an alligator comes when it's called.



the water on command. This allowed the staff to enter the exhibit safely. Next we wanted the gators to “hold” or stay in one place at a station until they were released so that they would not rush at the keepers. Teaching the alligators these simple commands proved to be rather easy, and we were amazed at how quickly they learned. Soon we added new behaviors to their repertoire such as to come, open their mouths or swim from place to place on command. When the alligators are stationed on land and asked to hold, the staff have trained them to remain motionless while they are being touched and inspected, even on the head.

The first summer of training for the alligators went remarkably well, but soon we were faced with a new dilemma. Our alligator exhibit is completely outdoors, and during the winter months, the gators go dormant and spend most of their time submerged in the pond, not feeding from October through April. The question quickly became apparent: Would the alligators remember their training commands after six



PLAN YOUR VISIT

Mark Your Calendars

March 2009

- 5 ZooView webcam zooms in on a new animal
- 7 March for Meals 5K Run/Walk
- 8 Leap Day—"Spring Forward" Event
- 21 Springtime at the Garden
- 29 Riverbanks Roundup airs at 7:00pm on ETV

April 2009

- 2 ZooView webcam zooms in on a new animal
- 6-8 ZOOM! Into Spring Camp
Wildlife Gardener Camp
- 9 *Southern Living's* Create Your Own Kitchen Garden
- 12 Easter Brunch
- 17 Members' Night Out
- 19 Riverbanks Roundup airs at 6:30pm on ETV
- 24 Wine Tasting at Riverbanks Botanical Garden
- 25 Party for the Planet
Botanical Garden Plant Sale

May 2009

- 7 Rhythm and Blooms
ZooView webcam zooms in on a new animal
- 10 Mother's Day Brunch
- 14 Rhythm and Blooms
- 15 Members' Night Out
- 21 Rhythm and Blooms
- 28 Rhythm and Blooms

June 2009

- 4 ZooView webcam zooms in on a new animal
- 8 Summer Camp begins at Riverbanks
- 19 Members' Night Out
- 21 Riverbanks Roundup airs at 6:30am on ETV

For more information about these and other upcoming events, visit www.riverbanks.org.



Sunday nights on ETV

March 29* ♦ April 19

May 17 ♦ June 21

6:30pm



Meet a Keeper

Discover New and Exciting Animal Facts

Explore Behind-the-Scenes

Have your question answered on TV! Email your name, hometown and zoo-related question to riverbanksroundup@riverbanks.org, and then watch Riverbanks Roundup on ETV to see if your question gets answered.

* The March 29 show will air at 7:00pm.



Join us at Riverbanks on Saturday, April 25, as we celebrate Earth Day with a Party for the Planet. Have fun learning how each of us can make a positive impact on the environment. From 10am to 3pm, participate in interactive and exciting educational activities designed to

encourage the reduction, reuse and recycling of natural resources. Enjoy timed animal enrichment encounters throughout the park and watch lions, lizards, lemurs and more as they interact with themed enrichment treats. All Earth Day activities are free with regular Zoo admission.

Springtime at the Garden Festival

Gardening in the Midlands: The Great Zone 8

Saturday, March 21 🌸 9am–4pm

**Gardening demonstrations • Plant vendors • Container exhibits
Floral arrangements • Live music • Garden art • Kids' activities**

**The only gardening festival of its kind in the Midlands
Free with regular Riverbanks admission**

Create Your Own Kitchen Garden

***Southern Living* Editor Brings Delicious Workshop to Riverbanks**

Thursday, April 9 • 7:00pm-9:00 pm • 3-D Adventure Theater

\$25 for general public, \$20 for members

Sign up early to reserve your space — www.riverbanks.org

Vegetable gardening is hot again. Whether you're interested in herbs by the back door or planning to feed the entire family, *Southern Living* garden editor Rebecca Bull Reed will show you her favorite edible gardens across the South. And what good is talking about food without eating it? She'll also whip up a few recipes for you to taste. Vegetables and herbs will also be available for purchase.

A fellow South Carolinian, Rebecca grew up in Santee, where vegetable gardening (the old fashioned way) was a part of her summers. She holds both a bachelor's and master's degree in horticulture from Clemson University. An award-winning landscape designer, Rebecca has created beautiful gardens not only in the South but also the Pacific Northwest. As associate garden editor for *Southern Living* magazine, her passion for design is fulfilled each month by bringing you the best the South has to offer. Rebecca resides in Birmingham, AL, with husband David – who is an incredible cook, her daughter Phoebe – who is the best 9-year-old alive, Lily the fox terrier, and Jo Jo the cat.



SHOOTS AND BLOOMS



How to Use Annuals Effectively by Melodie Scott-Leach, Director of Habitat Horticulture

Tough times got your garden brown? Many people shy away from adding annuals to their garden because of the cost for only one season, but annuals (plants that complete their life cycle in one growing season) are the hardest working plants in the garden. There are some general guidelines for making the most of annuals; try these suggestions and you can give those hardworking plants a chance to liven up your yard.

You don't need a bed that is exclusively for annuals. In fact, the best use of annuals is to carry the perennial border through the season. Whether summer or winter, annual flowers and foliage add color long after perennials have finished their show. Mix them liberally into the border amongst the perennials. Do pay close attention to flower colors to make sure the perennials and annuals don't clash. Also, don't forget foliage color. There are some great annuals that provide long lasting color with just their foliage. Coleus and caladiums are two commonly available and easy to grow choices for adding summer color.

Annuals are also essential for summer containers. If you are anxious about putting together a good looking container, simply fill a container with all of the same annual and let it do its thing. At Riverbanks, we use many tropical plants and treat them as annuals. Don't be afraid to pull those lackluster

tropical plants out of the house and put them to work in the garden.

Like all plants, annuals have certain requirements for best growth. Some will prefer shade, while some will prefer sun. This light preference is especially important for flowering plants. Make sure to carefully follow the instructions on the small plastic tags for light requirements. Many of the annuals grown for their flowers could also use a haircut in July. Petunias and zinnias both will flush out and flower much fuller with a trim. Any annuals that become leggy or lank will recover quickly from pruning.

When purchasing annuals, look for the signs of a healthy plant. White roots just filling the growing container are important. Avoid plants that have brown roots or roots bursting from the bottom of the container. These plants have been overwatered or have been in their container too long. Plants should be compact and have a healthy green color. Buying plants with buds will ensure more flowers in the long run than a plant in full flower.

Annuals are one the most important components of any landscape. Providing color all through the season, annuals are well worth the investment!

Gardening Tips for March and April from the Clemson Extension Urban Horticulture Center

- In early March, make a list of the kinds and quantity of annual plants you will need for spring planting. This pre-planning will help you purchase only what you need and avoid overindulgences
- In late March, prepare tender annuals (started indoors) for outdoor planting by reducing watering and placing plants outside during the day and returning them indoors at night. Continue this for three or four days to "harden" the plants before outdoor planting.
- Apply a complete fertilizer to spring flowering bulbs when their leaves emerge. This will ensure quality blooms.
- If you plan to move your houseplants outdoors, wait until the night temperatures stay above 60 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Wait until 2 or 3 weeks after your warm season lawn has completely greened-up before fertilizing (follow soil test recommendations).
- Don't be too quick to pull out shrubs that are damaged by cold. Cut back the dead branches above ground, but leave the roots in place until June. New shoots will emerge with a few weeks of warm June weather.
- Fertilize palms according to labeled instructions with a slow-release fertilizer having an analysis of 18-6-12 or 15-5-10. Palms benefit from a fertilizer that contains magnesium and other micronutrients.



Plant Spotlight Capsicum 'Numex Twilight'

by Andy Cabe
Director of Botanical Garden



With warm weather right around the corner, now is a great time to start seeds for spring planting. Ornamental peppers are wildly popular these days, and one of the favorite varieties at Riverbanks is Capsicum 'Numex Twilight'

'Numex Twilight' is a great pepper to use as an annual bedding plant because it is short in stature and spends the summer covered with tons of colorful little peppers. 'Numex Twilight' will reach about 24–30 inches tall and has small white flowers. The flowers are an afterthought because the 3/4 inch peppers steal the show. These little peppers start out purple, then change to yellow, then orange and finish off red when ripened. Since the plant is covered with peppers at different stages of development, you are treated to a cornucopia of different colored peppers at the same time.

Ornamental peppers like Capsicum 'Numex Twilight' are easy to grow. Give them full sun, rich garden soil and plenty of water, then watch them erupt with color. They work great in massed planting schemes or as solitary plants in a decorative container.

'Numex Twilight' peppers are easy to start from seed. It will take about two months before you start to see the first peppers, but from then on, you'll have plants covered in color until the first frost. If you are too impatient to go the seed route, check your local garden center to see if they offer plants for sale. You can sow the seeds directly in the ground, or you can get an early start by sowing them indoors and transplanting them outside after the last frost.

While these peppers are edible as well as ornamental, be cautious because they are extremely hot. Also, do not rub your face or eyes after handling Capsicum 'Numex Twilight' peppers; bad things can happen (I know from experience). Even with the risk of temporary blindness, these peppers are worth growing in your garden.

Gardener's Profile

by Amanda Segura, Garden Education Coordinator

If you hear the rumble of large machinery or chainsaws in the Garden, **JC Sallee** is probably involved. He is the power equipment guru on staff and enjoys the task of using machines to make a difficult gardening job easier. Growing up on a soybean farm in Pennsylvania, JC learned to work with plants early on. After several years in South Carolina, he relishes the fact that it is warm enough to work outside all winter long. JC maintains the Garden ticket booth area, the Bog Plaza and the newly completed Asian Fusion Garden located near the Treetops Bridge. Although he likes the fascinating carnivorous plants in the Bog Garden, he really enjoys creating water features, which he did in the Asian Fusion Garden where he constructed a small pond and surrounding boardwalk. No matter what the task is before him, JC jumps in with an array of experience and skills, and a big smile.



RIVERBANKS ADVENTURES



Our award-winning education programs are a great way to learn more about the fascinating life at Riverbanks Zoo & Garden!

These memorable, impactful programs start at \$9. If you are not a Riverbanks member, a general admission ticket will be required in addition to the program fee, as admission is not included in the price of ZOOventure or Garden Programs.

Programs for children ages 2–6 include arts and crafts, story time, games, live animal encounters and Zoo walks. These programs require one adult to attend with each child at no extra charge.

As always, we are interested in your comments and suggestions and invite you to call the Education Department for all ZOOventure programs at 803.779.8717 x1400, 9am to 4:30pm, Tuesday through Friday.

For Garden programs, call 803.779.8717 x1799. A registration form is below or you can register online at www.riverbanks.org.

We look forward to seeing you at Riverbanks!

ZOOVENTURE PROGRAM REGISTRATION FORM

Participant's Name: _____ Age: _____ Parent/Registrant's Name: _____

Street Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Member #: _____ Email: _____ Phone # (h): _____ Work/Cell #: _____

Please make checks payable to Riverbanks Zoo & Garden. Mail completed form and payment to:
 Riverbanks Zoo & Garden
 Attn: Education Department
 PO Box 1060
 Columbia, SC 29202-1060
 or register online at www.riverbanks.org

Program(s)	Date	Time	Fee

Program(s)	Date	Time	Fee

ZOOventure Programs/Early Childhood Classes

Ages: 2–6
Length: 45 minutes
Location: Wildlife Classroom
(across from Riverbanks Farm)

Date/Times: See calendar on page 16
Cost per class: \$9 per child

Early Childhood classes are an excellent opportunity for young explorers and parents to learn exciting things about nature. Each class is a new adventure designed to teach your youngster new concepts that are appropriate for young minds. These classes are a combination of story time, songs, games, hands-on activities, animal encounters (when available), crafts, and field trips behind-the-scenes (when available).

CLASS DESCRIPTIONS:

A Camping We Will Go

We will need a flashlight and sleeping bag, too, because camping is the thing to do! What animals will we encounter on our camping adventure? Come find out on this cool adventure.

Animal Aerobics

Let's do the crabwalk, kangaroo hop and the inchworm! Come swing, slither, swim, hop, crawl and groove while learning about interesting ways animals move.

Diggin' Dirty

Get ready to get down and dirty in this class where we will learn about and meet animals we call nature's recyclers.

Seeing Spots?

Animals have all different types of patterns, and not one pattern is ever identical. From giraffe spots to zebra and tiger stripes, this class will be the hot spot!

Garden Programs for Kids

Ages: 3-4
Length: 45 minutes
Location: Botanical Garden
Dates: See calendar on page 16
Time: 10am, unless otherwise noted
Cost per class: \$7, unless otherwise noted

CLASS DESCRIPTIONS:

Caterpillar Critters

Learn about a caterpillar's transformation into a butterfly and plants that it likes to eat.

Celebrate Spring

Join us as we celebrate the wonders of spring. The kids will make tulips and plant flowers to grow at home.

Rainbows

Search for all the colors of the Rainbow on this Garden adventure, and create a rainbow to keep.

Wildlife Gardener Camp

April 6–8 • 9am to 3:30pm • Ages: 8–11 • \$50

The National Wildlife Federation and the Junior Master Gardener Program have teamed up again this year to create Wildlife Gardener Camp! Featuring fun, interactive activities with a focus on animal habitats, food sources and gardening, this 3-day camp fosters an understanding of wildlife and teaches kids to appreciate the value in a garden habitat. Participants will create various forms of shelter and food sources as well as explore the Botanical Garden and Zoo for different habitats. A camp T-shirt and supplies are included in the registration fee. Participants should bring a bottle of water and lunch each day.

Garden Classes & Workshops for Adults

Ages: 16 and up
Length: 2 hours, unless otherwise noted
Location: Botanical Garden
Date/Times: See calendar on page 16
Cost: \$15, unless otherwise noted

Classes marked with an asterisk are eligible for the Garden Series discount of 5 classes for \$50. The discount will apply upon registration for all five.

CLASS DESCRIPTIONS:

Canning Tomatoes

Through canning, fresh tomatoes, homemade sauce and salsa can be enjoyed all year long. Canning tomatoes doesn't require a pressure cooker, so it has never been easier or more economical to enjoy home grown goodness.

Container Gardening

Watch us demonstrate the basics of creating full, invigorating containers, then make your own with our plants. Bring your own container up to 18 inches in diameter, and we provide the rest. **Cost:** \$25.00

Gardiners: A Brown Bag Demo

Bring a brown bag dinner to the Botanical Garden, meet fellow gardening enthusiasts and enjoy informal demonstrations with professional "green thumbs" the first Thursday of every month. Gardiners will offer timely growing tips and presentations on how to maintain your garden in a relaxed but informative environment.

Ages: 16 and up
Location: Botanical Garden - Parking at West Columbia entrance only
Dates: first Thursday of each month
Time: 6:00pm until 7:00pm - Gates open at 5:30pm
Cost: \$7

*Growing Small Fruits

Strawberries, blueberries and grapes, oh my! Small fruits are not forbidden, so learn how to grow your own with practical advice on care and cultivation. Fruits covered in this workshop include strawberries, blueberries, blackberries and grapes.

Class Registration

- ✦ Preregistration is required for all activities.
- ✦ Please complete the registration form.
- ✦ No registrations will be accepted by phone.
- ✦ Register early. Space is limited.
- ✦ Upon receipt of registration and payment, a confirmation will be mailed.
- ✦ If an activity is filled, your check will be returned.

WILD ABOUT SCOUTS

Riverbanks Zoo & Garden is pleased to once again offer Scout Saturdays designed especially for scouts of all ages. Every scout will receive the new Riverbanks Wildlife Patch, FREE with each paid registration (a \$5 value). Individuals are responsible for purchasing scout badges on their own.

Who can register? Any scout group or individual scout

When is the program offered?

March 28 at 10:00am and April 18 at 10:00am. Scout Saturdays will start with a short education program including live animal encounters and will follow with a self-guided adventure into the Zoo, individually or as a scout group.

*How to Grow Tomatoes

Get the sauce on how to grow great tomatoes. This workshop will cover the different varieties available, growing techniques, nutrient requirements and possible problems with tomato plants.

Landscape Design for Foundations

Learn the basic design principles of a good foundation planting, and then get a one-on-one consultation with your instructor. Participants should bring a sketch of their landscape or photos with them. Each class is limited to 10 participants. **Cost:** \$25.00

*Landscape Trees

We will discuss a variety of different tree species and their landscape value. Workshop will also cover general maintenance and care as well as inspecting trees for insects and diseases.

*Low Maintenance Plants

Whether you are limited on time or have a difficult space, these plants can make all the difference. Discover the world of plants that don't need much water, attention or love, but still look great all summer long.

Preserving Fruits

Preserve those small fruits by making jams and jellies and more. There are different methods to preserve fruit through canning and freezing, so make the most of the spring harvest and enjoy fresh tasting fruit all year long.

Pruning

Proper pruning is vital to healthy growth, shapely plants and a maintained garden. Discover the correct way to prune, tools to use, and which shrubs should be pruned now.

*Seasonal Interest Shrubs

Spring is a great time to plant shrubs in your yard and now is the time to look at shrubs with late winter interest. Incorporating a variety of shrubs in your landscape will give you year-round interest, so join us for a walking tour/display of some of the best performers in the Garden. **Length:** 1 1/2 hours

Viburnums and Hydrangeas

As companion plants or stand alone specimens, this workshop will cover their landscape value, different types of each, and their cultural requirements so you can have beautiful shrubs in your yard.

Cancellations and Refunds

- ✦ Written cancellation must be received at least two weeks before the scheduled program date in order to receive a refund or reschedule your reservation. No refunds will be issued for cancellations made less than two weeks before the program date.
- ✦ Riverbanks reserves the right to cancel or reschedule any activity.
- ✦ A full refund will be issued if Riverbanks cancels any activity.

How much does the program cost? The cost is \$10 per participant. This does not include the price of admission. Each participant will receive a Riverbanks Wildlife Patch.

* Please note: No more than one adult per child. Children should not be left unattended.

For details, visit www.riverbanks.org.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
March 1 2009	2	3	4	5 Animal Aerobics 10am–age 2 11am–ages 3 & 4 Gardiners 6pm – ages 16 & up	6	7 Animal Aerobics 10am–age 2 11am–ages 3 & 4 Pruning 10am – ages 16 & up
8	9	10	11 Animal Aerobics 10am–age 2 11am–ages 3 & 4 Rainbows 10am – ages 3 & 4	12	13 Animal Aerobics 10am–age 2 11am–ages 3 & 4	14 Seasonal Interest Shrubs 10am – ages 16 & up
15	16	17	18	19 Seeing Spots? 10am–age 2 11am–ages 3 & 4	20	21 Seeing Spots? 10am–age 2 11am–ages 3 & 4 Springtime at the Garden Festival 9am – 4pm
22	23	24	25 Seeing Spots? 10am–age 2 11am–ages 3 & 4 Rainbows 10am – ages 3 & 4	26	27 Seeing Spots? 10am–age 2 11am–ages 3 & 4	28
29	30	31				

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
April 2009			1 Celebrate Spring 10am – ages 3–4	2 Diggin' Dirty 10am – age 2 11am – ages 3–4 Gardiners 6pm – ages 16 & up	3 April 4 → Diggin' Dirty 10am – age 2 11am – ages 3–4 12pm – ages 5–6	4 How to Grow Tomatoes 10am – ages 16 & up Canning Tomatoes 1pm – ages 16 & up
5	6 ZOOM! Into Spring Camp Wildlife Gardener Camp	7 ZOOM! Into Spring Camp Wildlife Gardener Camp	8 ZOOM! Into Spring Camp Wildlife Gardener Camp	9 Create Your Own Kitchen Garden 7pm – ages 16 & up	10	11 Growing Small Fruits 10am – ages 16 & up Preserving Fruits 1pm – ages 16 & up
12	13	14	15 Diggin' Dirty 10am – age 2 11am – ages 3–4 Celebrate Spring 10am – ages 3 & 4	16	17 Diggin' Dirty 10am – age 2 11am – ages 3–4	18
19	20	21	22	23 A Camping We Will Go 10am – age 2 11am – ages 3–4	24	25 Plant Sale 9am A Camping We Will Go 10am – age 2 11am – ages 3–4
26	27	28	29 A Camping We Will Go 10am – age 2 11am – ages 3–4	30		

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
May 2009					1 A Camping We Will Go 10am – age 2 11am – ages 3–4	2 Container Gardening 10am – ages 16 & up
3	4	5	6 Caterpillar Critters 10am – ages 3–4	7 Gardiners 6pm – 16 & up	8	9 Landscape Design for Foundations 10am or 1pm ages 16 & up
10	11	12	13	14	15	16 Landscape Trees 10am – ages 16 & up
17	18	19	20 Caterpillar Critters 10am – ages 3–4	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30 Virburnums and Hydrangeas 10am – ages 16 & up
31						

ARE YOU A CURIOUS CAT?

We will tell you the tail...or tale!

Whether you're interested in "Training Tales" or "Playtime at the Zoo" or just want to go behind the scenes with the penguins, we have an exclusive experience for you. Explore out-of-sight areas with a certified tour guide and learn the secrets of animal care, animal training or your favorite animal. Behind-the-Scenes Adventure Tours are the perfect way to enhance your visit to Riverbanks, so be sure to bring your family or friends. All tours include up-close animal encounters and tour guide.

Visit www.riverbanks.org for tour schedules and to purchase tickets. Gift certificates are available.



ZOO CAMP... *The Adventure Starts June 8th!*

Three- to four-year-olds grow wild about **Sprout Camp!** Four- to five-year-olds can't wait for **KinderCamp!** Six- to eleven-year-olds go ape over **Wild Weeks**, and twelve- to fourteen-year-olds think **Adventure Camp** is awesome! Plus, they will plant flowers, build a bird's nest and learn about the animals their own backyard. Don't miss the chance to enroll your child in Riverbanks Zoo and Garden's summer camp programs—the most popular summer programs in the Midlands.



Sprout Camp (Ages 3–4 with parent)

Sprout Camp '09 is designed for the curious and imaginative 3 to 4-year-old and a parent. This three-day camp explores the interaction of plants and animals and guides children through the joy of gardening. Kids get a chance to discover the garden from an insect's perspective, as they "pollinate" flowers and explore the Garden. Plus, they will plant flowers, build a bird's nest and learn about the animals their own backyard. Each day consists of hands-on activities that capture the children's imagination through crafts, garden walks, explorations, stories and more. Sprout Camp meets at Riverbanks Botanical Garden on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday from 9:30am until 11:30am. The cost for a 3-day session is \$80 for Riverbanks members and \$130 for the general public. The same program is repeated throughout the summer, so campers should sign up for one week only.

KinderCamp (Age 4–5)

This summer, KinderCamp is the place to be to learn what it's like to be an animal in all sorts of weather. What do ducks do when it drizzles? What do chipmunks do when it's chilly? At Kinder Camp '09, your child will learn how animals from all over the world, and right here in our backyards, change with the seasons all year long. Campers will participate in hands-on science activities, Zoo walks, crafts and games, all while learning about animals and their wild homes. The cost for a one-week session is \$110 for Riverbanks members and \$180 for the general public. The same program is repeated throughout the summer, so campers should sign up for one week only.

Wild Weeks (Ages 6–11)

Wild Weeks '09 is the most unique and earth-friendly summer camp in Columbia. Each week, children learn about wildlife and the world around them at Riverbanks Zoo through crafts, games, keeper talks and live animal encounters. Campers are grouped according to their ages, ensuring developmentally appropriate activities. The cost for a one-week session of Wild Weeks is \$175 for Riverbanks members and \$245 for the general public. The same program is repeated throughout the summer, so campers should only sign up for one week.

Zooper Heroes – Over 70% of the Earth's surface is covered with water. Campers ages 6 to 7 will spend the week exploring water, its properties, and the animals and plants that need it to survive.

Riverbanks Rangers – Campers ages 8 to 9 will don their lab coats as they explore the natural world through fun science experiments and animal observations.

ZSI: Zoo Scene Investigators - Campers ages 10 to 11 will experience what it's like to be zoologists in the field as they learn methods of animal observation and population sampling.

Adventure Camp (Ages 12–14)

Riverbanks' Adventure Camp '09 is one of the most exciting and diverse camps in town! Each week participants will become environmental leaders by teaching younger campers about conservation actions like recycling, reusing and composting. When they're not inspiring others, Adventure Campers will travel to various sites in Columbia for some wild adventures, learn about exhibit design, animal enrichment and animal husbandry at the Zoo, and take part in crafts, games and live animal encounters. The cost for a one-week session is \$250 for Riverbanks members and \$320 for the general public. The same program is repeated throughout the summer, so campers should only sign up for one week.

Register for your favorite Zoo Camp today!
For more information, visit www.riverbanks.org.



- Week #1 – June 8-12**
- Week #2 – June 15-19**
- Week #3 – June 22-26**
- Week #4 – July 6-10**
- Week #5 – July 13-17**
- Week #6 – July 20-24**
- Week #7 – July 27-July 31**
- Week #8 – Aug 3-7**

Important Information for ALL Camps:

- Sign In/ Sign Out – Parents or guardians must sign in/out when students arrive and leave (absolutely no exceptions).
- Security – Students will not be released to anyone other than the parents or guardian unless special prior arrangements have been made (absolutely no exceptions). Photo ID is required to pick up campers. Please be prepared to show photo ID every day.
- Cancellations – Cancellations must be made no later than two weeks prior to camp date to receive a full refund (minus a \$30 processing fee).
- Drop Off - Morning drop off for regular day campers (including KinderCamp) is 8:30am. Extended Stay and Play drop off is at 7:45am (additional fee required).
- Pick Up - KinderCamp pick up – 12:00pm; Wild Weeks & Adventure Camp pick up – 3:00pm; and Extended Stay pick up – 5:00pm.
- Late Pick Up Fee – There will be a late pick up charge of \$10 for EVERY 5 minutes you are late picking up your child (after 12:15pm for KinderCamp, after 3:15pm for Wild Weeks & Adventure Camp, and after 5:15pm for Extended Stay).
- Registration is by mail and online only.



2009 Summer Camp Enrollment Form

Please submit 1 form for each child.

STEP 1 – SELECT YOUR PROGRAM

- Sprout Camp (ages 3–4)
 KinderCamp (ages 4–5)
 Wild Weeks (ages 6–11)
 Adventure Camp (ages 12–14)

STEP 2 – INFORMATION

Child's Name: _____ Age: _____ Parent's Name: _____

Street Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Member #: _____ Email: _____ Phone (h) _____ Work/Cell _____

T-shirt Size (circle one) Child S (6-8) Child M (10-12) Child L (14-16) Adult M Adult L Adult XL

PLEASE NOTE: T-shirts MUST be worn every day of camp. Each child receives one complimentary T-shirt. Additional shirts can be ordered for \$12 each.

STEP 3 – SELECT YOUR ENROLLMENT WEEK

Please indicate your choice of week in order of preference (1st, 2nd, 3rd)

- Week #1 (June 8-12)
 Week #2 (June 15-19)
 Week #3 (June 22-26)
 Week #4 (July 6-10)
- Week #5 (July 13-17)
 Week #6 (July 20-24)
 Week #7 (July 27-Aug 31)
 Week #8 (Aug 3- 7)

STEP 4 – CALCULATE YOUR ENROLLMENT FEE

	Members	General Public	Fees
Sprout Camp	\$ 80 per week	\$130 per week	\$ _____
KinderCamp	\$110 per week	\$180 per week	\$ _____
Wild Weeks	\$175 per week	\$245 per week	\$ _____
Adventure Camp	\$250 per week	\$320 per week	\$ _____
Extended Stay & Play	\$ 75 per week	\$ 75 per week	\$ _____
		Total Enclosed	\$ _____

STEP 5 – PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING

- Registration is by mail or by secure online form only: www.riverbanks.org
- Full payment MUST accompany registration.
- If you are requesting the same week as other families (carpooling, etc.) please send all registrations back together in the SAME envelope.
- Written cancellations MUST be received no later than two weeks prior to camp date to receive a refund (minus a \$30 processing fee).
- Make checks payable to Riverbanks Zoo and Garden.

STEP 6 - SEND FORM AND FULL PAYMENT TO:

Riverbanks Education Department Attn: Summer Camp
 PO Box 1060 - Columbia, SC 29202-1060

Applications are also available online at www.riverbanks.org

FINS, FEATHERS AND FUR



Leopard Shark

Triakus semifasciata

Status in the Wild

Vulnerable to overfishing

Where's Home?

Western United States—Oregon Coast to the Gulf of California

Digs at the Zoo

Sea of Cortez exhibit in the ARC (large kelp exhibit)

Best Time to See Me

Anytime

What's for Dinner?

Zoo fare includes squid, shrimp, clam, herring, mackerel and krill

Did You Know?

Like other sharks, leopard sharks have highly sensitive electroreceptors in their snouts that they use to find prey. Once they locate their favorite foods, such as worms and clams, they can dig them out of the sand or gravel.

Keeper's Note

Although Riverbanks' two male leopard sharks love to swim, visitors can often catch the sharks sitting on the bottom of the exhibit as well. Don't be alarmed, as this is normal behavior. Leopard sharks (along with some other shark species) are able to pump water across their gills, allowing them to breathe without having to constantly swim.



Caribbean Flamingo

Phoenicopterus ruber ruber

Status in the Wild

Common

Where's Home?

Northern Caribbean islands of Cuba, Turks and Caicos, Hispaniola and Bahamas, also coastal Venezuela and Colombia, and the Yucatan peninsula of Mexico. Flamingos live near large salty lakes or lagoons but avoid those with large numbers of fish that would compete with them for food.

Digs at the Zoo

Flamingo exhibit in front of the Birdhouse

Best Time to See Me

You can see lots of neat activity during breeding season, April through July, including nest building and incubating eggs.

What's for Dinner?

Zoo pellets (made just for flamingos), algae and tadpoles

Did You Know?

Flamingos are very loud during breeding season. Behaviors such as marching, saluting and social preening are abundant during this time.

Keeper's Note

Flamingos are often seen standing on one leg. This means that they are resting. In fact, most birds rest on one leg—it's just easier to see on flamingos because their legs are so long.



Siamang

Hylobates syndactylus

Status in the Wild

Endangered - largely due to habitat loss as a result of plantation development, illegal logging, encroachment and human development

Where's Home?

Forested regions of Malaysia, Thailand and Sumatra

Digs at the Zoo

Ape Island

Best Time to See Me

The siamangs at Riverbanks perform their notorious territorial call one or two times per day, normally between 9:00am and 10:00am.

What's for Dinner?

Siamangs in the wild eat lots of leaves, plus fruits, flowers, flower buds and insects. At Riverbanks, the siamangs eat leafy greens, fruits vegetables and a commercial primate biscuit.

Did You Know?

Both male and female siamangs have a large, inflated throat pouch that allows them to make loud resonating calls, or songs, to mark their territory. Siamang socialization is different from most non-human primates in that the males and females form monogamous pair bonds and remain together for their entire lives. Male siamangs play an active role in rearing their offspring, taking over the daily care of juveniles until they reach maturity.

Keeper's Note

In 2003, a female siamang named Mentawi was born at Riverbanks. Mentawi was rejected by her (first-time) mother, so Riverbanks staff introduced the infant to her father. He was trained to bring Mentawi to the keepers so that she could receive her bottle feedings throughout the day and night. Now five years old, Mentawi still resides at Riverbanks.



Alligator Snapping Turtle

Macrolemmys temminckii (translates as "big turtle")

Status in the Wild

Threatened. Over-collection for food markets greatly reduced their numbers, but they are now protected throughout their range

Where's Home?

Strictly an American turtle, alligator snappers are found in slow moving rivers, swamps and lakes in the Gulf of Mexico drainage river systems.

Digs at the Zoo

Swamp exhibit in the ARC's South Carolina gallery

Best Time to See Me

The alligator snapper is always visible, and no she isn't dead, but a slow metabolic rate means she just doesn't need to breathe very often—only about once per hour.

What's for Dinner?

Just about every kind of aquatic critter and a surprising amount of flora is on the menu, but alligator snappers are especially fond of eating other turtles.

Did You Know?

Alligator snapping turtles are one of the largest freshwater turtles. Males can often weigh more than 200 pounds. The famous "Beast of Busco" captured in 1948 reportedly weighed 499 pounds! They are totally aquatic animals and rarely leave the water except to lay eggs.

Keeper's Note

In the fall, we like to feed our snapping turtle water oak acorns as a seasonal treat. Riverbanks' turtle, a female hatched at the St. Louis Zoo, is 34 years old and weighs approximately 50 pounds. She can easily live for another century.

EXPLORE ♦ LEARN ♦ ENJOY

2009 Members' Night Series



It's Free, After-hours, and For Members Only

Two hours to stroll through the Zoo
Four Friday evenings
Free for members only
(no guest passes please)

Come one evening or all four.
The choice is yours!



April 17 ♦ Sniff, Spot, Poke, Pounce... Experience Enrichment

May 15 ♦ Flap, Fly, Glide, Soar—Tonight is for the Birds

June 19 ♦ Roar, Trumpet, Squeak, Howl—It's Cool to be a Mammal

July 17 ♦ Hop, Slither, Crawl and Swim...to the ARC



Gates open at 6pm. Park at the main Zoo entrance only.
Visit www.riverbanks.org for details.

Jazzy Up Your Garden

...with rare and unusual plants from Riverbanks

Botanical Garden Plant Sale

Saturday, April 25 • 9am–noon

Riverbanks Growing Center • 1201 Seminole Drive in West Columbia



Capsicum 'Garda Tricolor'

Colocasia 'Elena'

Hemerocallis lilio-asphodelus

Featuring 40+ varieties of Riverbanks' favorites

Annuals ● Perennials ● Bulbs ● Woody plants

Choose from more than 4,000 of
our hottest picks.
Be sure to arrive early—selections
are popular and sell fast!



Canna Tama-Talupa

Playing for Success

By Jenny Yeager
Coordinator of Early Childhood Education



“The play of children is their most serious business.” – Michael Montaigne

I recently sat in a conference where I was asked to think back to my childhood days and answer the question, “What was your favorite way to spend time?” Flashbacks of skinned knees, the smell of burning leaves with a magnifying glass, riding down the street pretending my bike was actually a car and memories of forcing my friends to be my pretend students begin to flood back again. I fondly recall using the Monopoly houses to create neighborhoods for my micro-mini machine cars, and I vaguely remember forcing my little sister to eat mud (pretend food) as we were playing Swiss Family Robinson, complete with rope pulleys to transport our water. As I was giggling in my seat recalling my childhood antics, I came to a great epiphany...my favorite way to spend time was simply using my imagination and playing.

What has happened to playtime? In this day in age, children are playing with a plethora of enrichment items such as video devices, computer games or specialized toys—many of which are considered educational and designed to ensure parents their children are adequately stimulated for appropriate

development. These stimulants are becoming more and more what children consider playtime, especially after a long day of school, where recess is becoming more of a thing of the past. Is this type of play actually good for their development? In all ages, but especially in early childhood stages, imaginative play is essential to the development of a child.

What skills are they developing? From birth, babies begin to actively learn. They start to gather, sort and process all the information from around them. This continues through the toddler years until adulthood. Cognitive development refers to “how a person perceives, thinks and gains understanding of his or her world through the interaction of genetic and learned factors.” The most well-known theory of cognitive development was developed by Jean Piaget. His principle states development occurs in four stages. In the programs I design at the Zoo, focusing on toddlers and early childhood, the children are in the pre-operational stage of development. In this stage, language matures and memory and imagination are developed.

What to Expect in the Pre-operational Stage

- 2–3 Years
- Use more instruments or tools
 - Strive for more independence
 - Understand discipline
 - Perform trial-and-error
 - Understand relationship between objects
 - Match similar shapes
 - Understand cause and effect
 - Better understanding of emotions
 - Begin to understand ordinary aspects of everyday life
- 3–4 Years:
- Use their memory skills
 - Show social interaction skills
 - Begin playing and cooperating with other children
 - Show increased attention span
 - Develop structured routines
 - Question everything that happens
 - Ask more abstract “why” questions
 - Begin to understand concept of time
 - Understand occurrences of special events
- 4–5 Years:
- Count
 - Say the alphabet
 - Distinguish size relationships
 - Recognize shapes
 - Understand concept of hours and minutes
 - Recognize the season
 - Ask “universal” questions about subjects

Can we play? How many times a day do you hear your child ask this question? There is a time for learning and a time for play. Wouldn't it be easy if we could just connect the two? We are in luck because research actually shows play is essential to development by contributing to all areas of their well-being, physically, socially, emotionally and cognitively. There are many benefits of play. Play allows children to use their creativity and develop their imaginations, increasing exploration of the world around them; it helps them develop new competencies (leading to enhanced confidence levels), practice decision-making skills and move at their own pace; play releases tension, allows children to discover their own areas of interest, and ultimately engage in the passions they wish to pursue. When playing with peers, there are the added benefits of learning to work in groups, sharing, negotiating and resolving conflicts.

Play at the Zoo? Play allows young children to use their natural curiosity to discover the world around them. In the Riverbanks Early Childhood Program, I try to facilitate this type of learning by enhancing the opportunities to play through classes with inquiry centers aimed at fostering their creativity and imagination. These programs also offer parents or grandparents a wonderful opportunity to engage fully with their child. Parents are given a unique chance to dive into the unknown with their child and navigate through the centers, learning and playing together.

A typical class begins with the children running through the door holding up their Homefun proudly for all to see. Homefuns are miniature versions of Homeworks to instill what we learned in the last class, but with a fun flair. Some past examples have included turning a toad bumpy, adding stripes to a snake, camouflaging a frog and turning a starfish into a star. They can decorate using anything they wish from home, whether as simple as crayons or as detailed as little Miss Ainslie's beloved glitter masterpieces. The children all know that in exchange for their Homefuns, they get a trip to the prize trunk! The other routine for every class involves the Banksport, which is a passport collection of stamps symbolizing every class they attend. Typically, at the end of every class as they finish up the inquiry centers, the children visit the stamp station to stamp their Banksport. Of course, this visit is never complete without the stamping of hands and arms as well.

The remainder of class varies depending on what we are learning. We begin with a lesson, and then sometimes have animal demonstrations, field trips, move right into inquiry centers or a combination of the above. Inquiry centers can be approached in any order and for any amount of time the child desires. This is quite the sight as parents become the followers rather than the leaders once center time starts.



Encouraging Children to Play Outdoors

Developing an appreciation for nature and enjoying outdoor play experiences can create childhood memories that may last a lifetime. Get outdoors and have fun!

- Nature scrapbook
- Animals to play with in sand, dirt, leaves or grass
- Nature art such as dandelion necklaces
- Outdoor alphabet hike
- Backyard obstacle course
- Make bird feeders
- Natural play objects like pinecones can become pretend food or money
- Family nature walk
- Build a fort
- Start a garden

continued on page 26

What are Inquiry Centers? Rather than sitting two-through four-year-olds down and lecturing at them, we involve them in the learning process. Young children make sense of the world by inquiring and by applying all their senses to acquire new knowledge. For example, rather than tell them bats hibernate in caves with their wings wrapped tightly around them and upside down, I created a bat cave with bats for the children to wrap the wings tightly and hang upside-down in the cave. Scorpions use their pincers to catch their prey, which are typically small arthropods and insects. Rather than just tell the children this, we show them a real scorpion, and then in the center they can become a scorpion with pincers and pick up prey (with the aid of Velcro). A zookeeper takes care of the animals at the zoo. Most children all know this, but in the center they can dress up like a keeper, discover they can move the exhibit around, learn the need to clean up droppings (rolled up construction paper), use their radios to call in for help realizing how much easier it is for them to work together to clean, and even use clickers and target poles to train the animals. More examples of what takes place during center time can be found in the photos of children from class.

Thinking back? What was your favorite way to spend time when you were young? Do your fondest memories involve the television or specialized toys? Or are they events when you were simply just using your imagination and playing? In the early childhood stages, imagination is being developed. Not only is creative play fun and memorable, but it is essential to the development of a child. Children can play for success. Gear up those imaginations and get ready to turn into an animal or make mud pie in a fort. Get outside, or find things indoors and just simply play with the kids today!

Resources:

“Cognitive Development.” *Encyclopedia of Children’s Health Online*. 2007. *Encyclopedia of Children’s Health*. 22 December 2008. <<http://www.healthofchildren.com>>.

Ginsburg, Kenneth R. “The Importance of Play in Promoting Healthy Child Development and Maintaining Strong Parent-Child Bonds.” *American Academy of Pediatrics*. 119.1 (2007): 182-188.

Shelov, Steven P and Robert E. Hannemann. *Caring for Baby and Young Child: Birth to Age 5*. New York: Bantam, 1999.

Want to read more about play-based learning?

Learning Through Play – Babies, Toddlers and the Foundation Years

By Tina Bruce

Playing to Get Smart

By Elizabeth Jones & Renatta Cooper

Nature’s Playground: Activities, Crafts, and Games to Encourage Children to Get Outdoors

By Fiona Danks





Rhythm and Blooms

MUSIC & ART
IN THE GARDEN

THURSDAYS IN MAY 6:00PM - 9:00PM

WWW.RIVERBANKS.ORG

CONSERVATION CORNER

By Ed Diebold

Director of Animal Collections & Conservation



Herd of Grevy's zebras – Photo courtesy of Martha Fischer

STRIKING A CHORD

With one look, I am sure you'll agree the Grevy's zebra is one of the world's most strikingly beautiful animals. It is the largest of the zebras and has an amazing coat of narrow stripes that are bisected by a bold black stripe running down the spine. Unfortunately, the species enjoys the dubious distinction of having undergone one of the most substantial range reductions of any African mammal, now being found in the wild only in northern Kenya and southern Ethiopia. Formerly also found in Somalia, it is now extinct there.

In addition to the reduction in range, overall numbers of Grevy's zebras have declined from an estimated 15,000 animals in the late 1970s to current estimates of between 2,000 and 2,500 animals. The species is now listed by the IUCN (World Conservation Union) as endangered, a species that faces a very high risk of extinction in the wild. A number of factors have contributed to the species' decline including killing for meat and medicinal purposes, loss of access to critical resources due to competition with domestic livestock and an increasing scarcity of these resources due to over-exploitation.

ADDRESSING THE NEED

The Grevy's Zebra Trust (GZT) was established in order to conserve the species in the community rangelands of Kenya and Ethiopia. One of the GZT's main goals is to support the conservation management of the Grevy's zebra with the aim of providing it better access to critical resources. In order to achieve this conservation goal, the GZT is working with local community conservancies in northern Kenya to develop

wildlife and habitat management practices that favor Grevy's zebras and other wildlife.

In 2005, Save the Elephants Animal Tracking Project and the Lewa Wildlife Conservancy initiated a collaring project using GSM (global system for mobile communication) in order to better understand Grevy's zebra travel patterns and resource utilization in the Samburu region. The project has since grown in scope with seven institutions, including GZT, now working together through a formal Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

INVOLVING THE COMMUNITY

It is important also to understand and monitor Grevy's zebra population dynamics. Project partners have determined that this is best accomplished on the ground through repeated sightings of collared animals. To this end and in order to encourage and enhance management of the species by local communities, the GZT is working to train community members to track GSM-collared Grevy's zebras. It is hoped that the end result will be proactive, community-based management in favor of the Grevy's zebra and other wildlife.

Milk-producing females are particularly impacted by restricted access to water as a result of competition with domestic livestock. Previous research shows a negative relationship between foal survival and distances traveled by their mothers in search of resources. So, by identifying breeding hotspots, project partners hope to work with existing community conservancies to secure and better manage these areas, thereby increasing foal survivorship.



PHOTO COURTESY OF GREVY'S ZEBRA TRUST

(above) Training of community members – photo courtesy of Grevy's Zebra Trust

Active community participation in Grevy's zebra conservation activities is producing more positive attitudes about the species and a wider awareness of the challenges that it faces. Community participation also strengthens the understanding of and commitment to the species. It is hoped that program partners working hand-in-hand with local communities will translate to an optimistic future for the Grevy's zebra. Riverbanks is proud to support this outstanding work.

Reference -Belinda Low, "Radio-tracking of GSM-collared Grevy's zebra in northern Kenya" (Riverbanks Conservation Support Fund grant application) Grevy's Zebra Trust.

(below) Community member observing a Grevy's zebra photo courtesy of Belinda Low



(below) Collaring a zebra with GSM – photo courtesy of Jeff Bonner



JUNIOR ZOOKEEPER



Frog Watchers to the Rescue

The Frogs are Calling

As the weather begins to warm, the night air is filled with new sounds. We may hear a “RIBBIT!” or a “CROAK!” Who is calling? Frogs and toads!



Little Green Peeper Frog



Fowlers Toad

Frogs in a Fix

Frogs and toads are in an animal group called amphibians. Amphibians have special skin that makes them sensitive to changes in their environment. Pollution and loss of habitat can hurt these animals. Scientists all over the world are working together to keep amphibians healthy, and you can join in the rescue!

Hop to It!

You can use your eyes and ears to help frogs and toads. Riverbanks Zoo and other zoos are now part of **Frogwatch USA**. The program studies frogs and toads all over the United States of America to find ways to help protect them. **Frogwatch USA** needs your help collecting information. Here's how to help:

- Search for a frog home with your family or friends. Frogs and toads live near water. Look in safe areas for ponds, marshes and other wetlands.
- Learn about frogs and toads near you. There are 29 species of frogs and toads in SC. How many can you find?
- Log on to www.frogwatch.org. Lots of frog watching tips and information can be found there.
- Tell us what you found. Let the staff at Riverbanks know what you've learned or ask us frog questions. Your question or findings may be reported on Riverbanks Roundup, an ITV and Riverbanks Zoo production on South Carolina ETV.
Email us at: riverbanksroundup@riverbanks.org



Green Tree Frog

**ASSOCIATION
OF ZOOS &
AQUARIUMS**

**NATURE
QUEST**
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Easter Brunch • Sunday, April 12

Treat your loved ones to a hearty Easter Sunday brunch in the rustic Ndoki Lodge at the Zoo. Enjoy a traditional Southern breakfast or choose from custom-ordered omelets, honey glazed ham, grilled salmon, chicken piccata, fresh vegetables, fruits and gourmet desserts. Seating is limited, so make your reservation today!

View the complete menu and make your reservations online at www.riverbanks.org.



Ticket Prices: \$31.95 adults, \$15.95 children ages 3-12
Taxes are included in ticket price. Zoo admission is not included.

Two seating times: 10:30am or 1:00pm

Reservation deadline: Tuesday, April 7



Questions? Call 803.978.1055

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