

It's in the Name



Mesker Park Zoo & Botanic Garden. Without the Garden, there is no Zoo. Not only does it add stunning beauty, it is a crucial element to the Zoo's entire ecosystem. We have thousands of plant species on the property, each with its own needs. And it's up to Misty Minar, the head of the Botanic Department, and her team to make sure this critical side of the Zoo thrives.

The botanic team members enjoy the challenges that come with understanding such a diverse and delicate system of plants in a unique setting. It's not only important to use native plants accustomed to our local climate, Misty and her crew need to care for plants from biomes around the world. Add to this the balance of animal health, guest safety, water conservation, and avoiding pesticides; the botanical team learn something new every day. Fortunately, our accreditation with the Association of Zoos and Aquariums provides the team with resources and networking to learn from zoos throughout the country.

Common tasks with tree, lawn, debris, and overgrowth are further complicated when they are working alongside wolves, jaguars, and other amazing but dangerous

animals. Zookeepers accompany them monitoring their safety and animal stress. It can be a bit of an amusing struggle to provide the animals' homes with trees and shrubs for shade and privacy, only to find the animals often digging up, eating, or playfully knocking down their beautiful new plants.

Onsite are 3 greenhouses, tropical, semi-tropical, and cold-frame, where the team houses plants for the winter, propagates new plants, and prepares for events such as The Orchid Escape Display and The Bloomin' Zoo Plant Sale. Learn more about these events and the amazing work of Misty's team in our Zoo Lovers' Magazine [FREE to Zoo members](#). Misty goes much further in depth on seasonal tasks and challenges, using bugs to fight bugs, native plants, composting, and even the value of manure!

Upcoming Events

It is always a rewarding experience for Mesker Park Zoo staff when we come together and give our all to host an event for our local community. We love to engage with our visitors over our shared love of plant and animal conservation. We consistently strive to bring our valued community members events to show them our appreciation for coming to the zoo.

As we enter 2023, the horticultural team is working collectively to prepare for the Zoo's [13th annual Orchid Escape](#). For those who don't know, Orchid Escape is a deeply unique, South American experience in Amazonia where you can surround yourself in hundreds of beautiful orchids and one of a kind moss sculptures along with the rest of the wild animals and plant life that reside in Amazonia. What



makes this event even more special is how long it is available to view; from February 12th to March 18th, visitors will have five whole weeks to get a chance to see Orchid Escape.

For our adult guests (21+) interested in a more intimate way to experience Orchid Escape we will be hosting an exclusive Orchid Preview Party on Saturday, February 11th from 6pm – 9pm. Here you will be able to spend the evening viewing the orchids, getting art demonstrations, listening to live music, and attend our silent auction all while tasting South American themed hors d'oeuvres and specialty cocktails. Though Amazonia will be open to the public during this time, due to ongoing HPAI concerns in our area, precautions will be in place for the safety of our birds.



Thank you to our Orchid Escape Sponsors!

Whitlyn Aquatics
Jaz Industrial LLC
La Campirana
Oak Hill Animal Hospital
Brandon Cooper
Danny & Patricia Bateman

Dates to Remember

Teddy Bear Clinic - Sunday, January 29th
Orchid Escape Preview Party - February 11th
Orchid Escape - February 12th - March 18th

Wild, Wild Animals!

Meet our newest residents! At the end of 2022, we welcomed (Max & Maddie) 2 Ring-tailed lemurs to the Discovery Center. They are ADORABLE! They are more timid and often hide at the top left corner of the indoor exhibit. During the summer, they will be found outdoors enjoying the sun.

Connect to our WILD residents here at MPZ & BG through our Social media accounts! From videos to pictures, there's lots to see and learn everyday.



We started [#whereamiwednesdayMPZ](#). 4 second clip is shared and it's up to YOU to figure out where we are! There are monthly contest winners if you guess correctly. COME FIND #WheresBlake

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