

Rainforest Adventure

at the Puyallup Fair



THIS FALL AT THE PUYALLUP FAIR YOU HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO EXPLORE THE SETTING OF A SOUTH AMERICAN RAINFOREST. STROLL PAST A POND ON A MUSHROOM PATH WHILE VIEWING WATERFALLS, ROCK SLIDES AND TROPICAL PLANTS. THE RAINFOREST ADVENTURE EXHIBIT GIVES US A GLIMPSE OF THE ENVIRONMENT THAT PROVIDES US WITH PRODUCTS WE USE EVERY DAY.

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Coffee

Many people enjoy one or more cups of coffee each day. But did you know that it can take six to eight years for a coffee plant to be in full production? This long process affects people and animals of the rainforest. By making careful choices when purchasing your coffee, you can help the rainforest.

Coffee beans were traditionally grown in the shade of canopy trees (hence the term "shade-grown") but when farmers learned they could produce more beans that didn't require any shade, they cleared the trees and adopted this new practice. Producing more beans in the same amount of time may seem like a good idea, but the smaller trees also required the use of pesticides. In addition, the cutting of tall canopy trees forced migratory birds out of their homes. When coffee is shade-grown, birds can stay in their natural habitat. When you purchase shade-grown coffee, you are choosing to help protect the wildlife of the rainforest.



Phil Beattie, Director of Coffee of Dillanos Coffee Roasters, Sumner met with Nicaraguan children outside their one-room schoolhouse while their parents were harvesting shade-grown coffee sold in the United States.

Chocolate

Like coffee, cacao beans used to make chocolate are best grown in the shade. Similarly, when farmers cut trees to yield a higher crop of cacao beans, pesticides are required and tree-dwelling animals lose their homes. In addition, the land used to grow cacao trees in the direct sun becomes less fertile for future crops. As a result, the land is damaged. How can you be sure that the chocolate you eat is produced in a manner that doesn't hurt the rainforest environment? Look for chocolate that is grown sustainably. When a product is grown sustainably it means that it was raised by not harming the environment. It also supports the local workers by providing them with fair wages. That's a win for your taste buds and the environment!



Bananas

Bananas have also traditionally been raised by methods of deforestation and the use of pesticides, harming the people and wildlife in their environment. But growers have been getting wise to the damage done. Many companies have stopped using pesticides and have started to recycle the materials used in banana production such as plastic bags and wooden pallets. Banana growers can also help the environment by disposing of their waste in an environmentally-friendly manner. For example, some growers turn banana leaves and stems into compost or turn mushy bananas into puree or cattle food. These solutions make a big difference when producing one of the largest fruit crops in the whole world! What changes can you make in your home or community to help the environment?



NEW!

Here for 2012 only. Walk through and experience an authentic tropical rainforest atmosphere. This multi-sensory expedition is a lush rainforest exhibit complete with the critters that inhabit this environment. The toucans, anacondas, snapping turtles and geckos will join you on your adventure through plant life growing from the ground to the canopy! Naturalists and interpreters will also be on hand to explain how every layer contributes to the environment and the challenges facing these unique ecological wonders. Educational showtimes are daily at noon, 2, 4, and 6 p.m.



Watch animals scamper around while learning more about their habitat.



Resources: <http://www.rainforest-alliance.org>, <http://business-ethics.com/2010/06/19/2440-banana-industrys-impact-on-rainforests/>

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Gate admission is free for students! The Puyallup Fair offers free tickets to most schools in western Washington, so if you're a student just ask your teachers or principal for your ticket. Last year, schools in the Puget Sound region received a total of 750,147 free passes to the Puyallup Fair.

To learn more or register for Newspapers In Education, please email us at nie@seattletimes.com or call 206/652-6290.