



Transcript

[Giraffes... What Do They Eat?](#)

Aree Kongmuang: I've been at the Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens for the past four years. As a giraffe keeper, every day it's pretty full. We have seven giraffe in our herd and that means that we're cleaning a lot, we're feeding a lot, we're keeping an eye on them, observing our animals every day.

So, I'm going to do Duke's diet. For Duke in the p.m., he gets three different types of grain. All the giraffe get three different types of grains, so Duke's going to get five and a half pounds of ADF 16, five pounds of wild herb, and then two and a half pounds of wild herb plus. So finishing Duke's diet with this last grain is wild herb plus. He's going to get two and a half pounds of that to give a total of 13 pounds for tonight. And then we'll mix it up, give it to him tonight.

They get fresh alfalfa hay every day as part of their diet. They get free choice in addition to the grain. It comes in compact flakes, so we like to fluff it out as much as we can for them. They'll reach through with their tongues in their mouths and grab pieces out as they choose. They're tall animals so all their feeders are very tall and high.

LeShea Upchurch: We have a lot of different edible plants on exhibit. We have magnolia, which is bitter tasting and we've never really had the giraffe want to eat it until our newest calf nicknamed Forrest. He really seems to enjoy eating the bitter magnolia. But we also have wax myrtle. We have elm and mulberry. We have sycamore among a lot of different other plants on exhibit. Duke really enjoys bananas. He just really seems to love bananas.

I think the kopjes definitely help make it a more natural environment. The giraffe can move around them. They can separate themselves if they would like. It also provides kind of a natural enrichment because we have plants and edible trees in there that they can eat from. And they're so tall though that they won't eat it all the way down like they would if they could get to it all at one time.

Aree Kongmuang: Since I was a kid I've always wanted to be a zookeeper. I've always wanted to work with animals. That was my path from day one. So after high school I went to Colorado State and I got a degree in zoology. Then I had an apprenticeship at Denver Zoo for two years. I worked through all the animal departments, kind of figured out where I wanted with and what animals I liked.