Leftover Halloween Pumpkins Repurposed and Feasted on by Oakland Zoo Animals

It's become an annual tradition to work with local pumpkin patches in their donations of leftover Halloween pumpkins and repurposing them as tasty treats and enrichment for our animals here at Oakland Zoo.

OAKLAND, Calif. (PRWEB) November 10, 2018 -- Instead of ending up as waste in a compost or trash bin, hundreds of leftover pumpkins were donated to Oakland Zoo as treats and enrichment for the animals. Zookeepers headed out in trucks the morning of November 1st to pick up truck-fulls of leftover pumpkins from local Halloween pumpkin patches for Oakland Zoo’s animals to feast on. Now a tradition, this annual happening becomes quite a treat for many animals at Oakland Zoo, due to the generous donations of Moore's Pumpkins in Castro Valley, Fuji Melon and Monterey Market.

“Making smart and sustainable choices is important to us. Most Halloween pumpkins - 1.3 billion pounds, in fact - end up in the landfill where they generate greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to global warming. Pumpkins can be made into yummy seeds, soup or bread and eaten, composted at home, or donated to Oakland Zoo for a fun and healthy food source for our animal family!,” Amy Gotliffe, Director of Conservation at Oakland Zoo.

Truckloads of large, medium, and mini pumpkins from local patches have been sorted and unloaded by zookeepers. Besides being added to many animal diets, zookeepers have creatively crafted the orange vegetables into enrichment items such as pumpkin kabobs, gourd bowls filled with meat treats, puzzle feeders, and even frozen delicacies. Zoo visitors are able to see animals feasting on the sweet treats daily now through the end of December.

“The pumpkin is amongst the favorite of treats for elephants,” said Gina Kinzley, Lead Elephant Keeper. “If they can't fit a whole pumpkin directly into their mouths, they puncture it with their tusks or stomp it open with their foot. Most of these pumpkins would otherwise be thrown out or tilled back into the land. The donations provide a fun and healthy food source for so many of our animals.”
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