



It's huckleberry season with free permits for personal use now available from the Gifford Pinchot National Forest in southwest Washington.

Picking Wild Huckleberries

Gifford Pinchot offers free permits

As summer reaches its peak, many like to venture into the National Forests where huckleberries offer a delicious harvest for your home table.

The Gifford Pinchot National Forest east of Vancouver began offering free-use huckleberry picking permits for personal consumption on Saturday, allowing up to one gallon of berries per day and a total of three gallons per year from designated picking areas.

Berries obtained under a free-use permit may not be sold. To apply, visit the free permit site apps.fs.usda.gov/gp. Commercial charge berry permits will be available to purchase in-person on Aug. 10 at ranger district offices and the Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument Headquarters.

You are asked to follow social distancing guidelines issued by the Centers for Disease Control by wearing a mask when entering a Forest Service facility and maintaining a six feet minimum distance from others. If you are feeling sick, stay home and remember to keep hands clean.

Health Check for Zoo's Red Panda

Veterinarians and animal-care staff conducted their first examination of Mei Mei's 6-week-old red panda cub at the Oregon Zoo Monday, and answered a question that's been on a lot of people's minds: It's a boy!

Mei Mei, a 4-year-old red panda at the Oregon Zoo, gave birth to her cub on June 18. Since then, animal-care staff have been taking a hands-off approach, giving the mom and newborn as much privacy as possible in a behind-the-scenes maternity den.

"Mei Mei has been a terrific mom so far, and her boy appears to be in great health," said animal curator Amy Cutting, who oversees the zoo's red panda area. "We'll still be taking a mostly hands-off approach, and let the cub gradually get used to our care staff. It will be another month or so before he ventures out of the den box on his own."

Red pandas are considered an endan-



PHOTO BY MICHAEL DURHAM, COURTESY OF THE OREGON ZOO. A newborn red panda cub had his first veterinary exam Monday at the Oregon Zoo.

gered species, with populations declining by about 50% in the past 20 years. While exact numbers are uncertain, some estimates indicate as few as 2,500 may be left in the wild. In addition to habitat loss and fragmentation, red pandas also face threats from poaching and the illegal wildlife trade.

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