

BACKGROUND STORY

ALEXANDER

Rehabilitation Centre : Nyaru Menteng
Arrival Date : 5 September 2020
Age on Arrival : 9 months
Current Age : 5 years
Gender : Male
Current Position : Forest School Group 5
Health Status : Healthy (BCS 3)

Alexander: The Curious Learner of Forest School

Alexander was found by local residents in Katingan Regency without his mother. He was then handed over to the Central Kalimantan Natural Resources Conservation Agency (BKSDA) officers and transferred to the Nyaru Menteng Rehabilitation Centre on September 5, 2020. Upon his arrival at Nyaru Menteng, he was estimated to be around nine months old and weighed 3.5 kilograms.

Like all new arrivals at Nyaru Menteng, Alexander underwent a quarantine period lasting approximately two to three months to ensure his health condition. After completing his three-month quarantine, Alexander joined other young orangutans in Forest School, where he began learning basic survival skills.

Currently, Alexander is happily spending his days in the Large Group of Forest School. His social skills have improved significantly. Previously known as a solitary orangutan, he has recently been spending more time at the feeding platform, socializing with Niniek, Greta, Delilah, Hanua, and Monyo. Together with his friends, Alexander actively explores the Forest School area. He doesn't wander too far but now confidently climbs tall trees.

According to our surrogate mothers, Alexander is one of the most curious students in his group. One day, while the Forest School youngsters were inspecting a piece of rotting wood, Alexander did something different, he approached the wood and pulled out a type of white-capped mushroom growing on its surface. Fortunately, the mushroom turned out to be edible. This ability to find edible fungi seems to stem purely from his curiosity, as his caretakers had never introduced this food source to the group.

On another day, our surrogate mothers offered Alexander a small white flower growing on a vine in the Forest School. He plucked one petal, tasted it, and spat it out. But not long after, Alexander found the same flower on his own and tasted it again. This time, he seemed to like it!

Although orangutans are primarily frugivores, or fruit eaters, in the wild they also consume a variety of other foods, including leaves, flowers, bark, pith, honey, insects, and fungi. A study has revealed that orangutans can eat up to 2,000 different types of food. The ability to

recognize various food sources is an essential survival skill for orangutans. If young Alexander continues to nurture his natural curiosity, he will no doubt enjoy an endless variety of forest delicacies in the future!