

Project Exploration's **MESOZOIC GARDEN**

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What is the Mesozoic Garden?

Project Exploration's Mesozoic Garden was created for the 2003 Chicago Flower and Garden Show, held March 8-16th at Navy Pier. The Mesozoic Garden recreates a primeval river bank as it might have appeared during the age of the dinosaurs. A dense, green, misty environment is home to bubbling water, sounds of insects and amphibians - and the largest crocodile that ever lived.

SuperCroc, a forty-foot-long, dinosaur-eating crocodile crouches on the bank of the river protecting a nest of hatchlings. Surrounding the ancient reptile is a natural progression of mosses, horsetails, cycads, ferns, palms, blooming magnolias and conifers. Project Exploration's Mesozoic

What is Project Exploration?

Project Exploration is a Chicago-based non-profit science education organization. Co-founded in 1999 by University of Chicago paleontologist Dr. Paul Sereno and Executive Director Gabrielle Lyon, Project Exploration is dedicated to making science accessible to the public - especially city kids and girls. Project Exploration's work demonstrates that all people - even kids with less than perfect academic backgrounds - can be inspired by the wonders of science to explore the world around them and discover their own potential.

Project Exploration's Mesozoic Garden includes a website and interactive webgarden.
Find it at www.projectexploration.org/garden

What makes Project Exploration's garden unique?

Project Exploration's Mesozoic Garden uses only plants that were alive during the time of the dinosaurs and flowering plants that emerged at the end of the dinosaur era. Only by bringing together plants from disparate corners of the globe and a variety of environments can we recreate a dinosaur-age scene... a scene SuperCroc might have laid eyes on.

What kinds of plants are in the garden?

Project Exploration's garden brings together representatives from all plant groups alive at the time of the dinosaurs, including mosses, horsetails, cycads, ferns, tree ferns, palms, ginkoes, blooming magnolias and conifers. To see pictures of the plants in the Mesozoic garden and learn more about their ancient history, visit the webgarden at www.projectexploration.org/garden.

Do the plants in this garden look similar to their fossil ancestors?

Some of the plants, like the Ginko, look almost identical to closely related species that lived millions of years ago. Some of the plants, like Aurucaria, were the dominant trees of the forest in their day.... 100 million years ago. The Mesozoic Garden includes a real fossil tree trunk of Aurucaria. It is 135 million years old, weighs approximately 400 pounds and was discovered in Africa's Sahara Desert.

Project Exploration's Garden Partners:

Special thanks to Apex Landscaping for installation sponsorship; the Chicago Park District horticulturalists, Bukiety, and Personal Spaces for garden design assistance; and paleobotanist Caroline Stromberg of the University of California, Berkeley.