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CREATIVITY IS BLOOMING AT ZOO'S GARDEN AND ART FESTIVAL APRIL 23 & 24, 2017

April 20, 2017-- *Jacksonville, FL* – The Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens is buzzing with excitement for the Spring's most vibrant event, the Garden and Art Festival, to be celebrated April 23 & 24, 2017.

The two-day event will feature artist demonstrations, live music, garden tours led by the Zoo's horticulture staff, and most importantly – plants and artwork available for purchase from local artists and plant vendors, including plants right out of the Zoo's award-winning gardens!

From artisanal beeswax cloth wraps to fused glass, plumeria cuttings to exotic bamboo, acoustic music by local performers to sangria to sip on, this festival has something for everyone. Guests will certainly be able to find the perfect Mother's Day gift at the Zoo this weekend.

Vendors will be located in the Zoo's Great Lawn and Gardens at Trout River Plaza with the First Coast Plein Air Painters scattered throughout the Zoo. Jacksonville Museum of Contemporary Art and Palm Arts & Photo will be providing crafts for children.

In celebration of Earth Day, the Garden and Art Festival will highlight sustainability and conservation, featuring exhibitors such as JEA, the Eastern Diamondback Conservation Foundation and Apple Rabbit Composting. The Zoo's commitment to plant conservation will be spotlighted with topics including the work being done to save the Chapman's fringed orchid, the importance of using native plants in landscaping and how to attract vital pollinators to your yard. A special presentation will be given by renowned native-plant expert, Dr. Craig van der Heiden on Saturday at 11 am.

The Garden and Art Festival is free with Zoo admission. Proceeds from the sale of Zoo plants will go directly to plant-conservation initiatives. Hours and details including garden tour times can be found at www.jacksonvillezoo.org/gardenandart.

About Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens

For over 100 years, the Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens has aimed to inspire the discovery and appreciation of wildlife through innovative experiences in a caring environment. Starting in 1914 with an animal collection of one red deer fawn, the Zoo now has more than 2,000 rare and exotic animals and 1,000 species of plants, boasting the largest botanical garden in Northeast Florida. **The Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens is a nonprofit organization and a portion of every ticket sold goes to the over 45 conservation initiatives Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens supports around the world, and here in NE Florida.** JZG is proud to be an accredited member of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums. For more information, visit jacksonvillezoo.org.