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Science, Features, Education Editors
Images available
Contact: Emelia.Cowans@ncmail.net
919-733-7450, ext. 305

Bees take center hive at BugFest 2008

New "Bee Zone" with local beekeeping experts, Beehive hairdo contest, Cafe Insecta's new gourmet flair, Bug eating expert Dave Gracer and Evening Insectival!

(RALEIGH) – There's never been a BugFest like this one! The largest single-day bug event of its kind in the nation returns this year with more displays, more stations, more bug food and more fun! The festivities get underway Saturday, September 20 at 9 a.m. and the party doesn't stop until 9 p.m.! For one day, the North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences in downtown Raleigh transforms into a bug-centric paradise for the brave, the quirky and the curious, and it's all free.

All four floors of the Museum, as well as Bicentennial Plaza outside and the Capitol grounds, will be teeming with bugs, bug-lovers and bug-experts, with more than 100 different displays and presentations, live music and more. With bees taking center "hive" as BugFest's theme bug, the Museum is adding a new **Bee Zone** on the Capitol Grounds featuring the ever popular bee-bearding demonstrations, Arthropod Olympics (for kids 5+), representatives from Brushy Mountain Bee Farm (one of the largest beekeeping supply companies in the nation) and local beekeepers who will sell their honey. Did you know that eating locally produced honey helps prevent seasonal allergies because bees use the pollen from local plants which eventually ends up in your honey?

Jim Alberti and his amazing flea circus returns as the featured guest in our **Kid Zone**. The new Kid Zone Stage will feature the Roachingham 500 Cockroach races, Storytime, and the Sandbox Band. Kids can also make their own bug-sational creations courtesy of the Scrap Exchange. The young and young at heart can even make their own funky bug antenna crowns to wear throughout the day and visitors can purchase BugFest t-shirts in adult and children's sizes. There will also be a station on insects of the Dead Sea region on the 2nd floor, to complement our current special exhibit "The Dead Sea Scrolls."
(There is a fee to enter the exhibit.)

What BugFest would be complete without food! Step right up and get your Silkworm Sundae with caramelized silkworm pupae and chocolate covered ants ... and that's just desert! Cafe Insecta will take on a more gourmet flair this year, with not one, but four local chefs from restaurants like Jujube in Chapel Hill and Dos Taquitos Centro in Raleigh, making bug-inspired delights throughout the day. Traditional food and drink are also available for sale.

This year's featured guest and keynote speaker is Dave Gracer, Entomophagist Extraordinaire. Gracer is a teacher, writer and president of Sunrise Land Shrimp, the edible insect company and quite the expert on bug-eating. He will give three presentations in the WRAL Digital Theater entitled, "Entomophagy so Far" at 11 a.m., "The Planned Future of Entomophagy" at 2 p.m., and "Insects and Cultures" at 5 p.m. (He'll also be one of our celebrity judges at the BugFest Critter Cookoff media preview on Friday, September 19.)

Evening Insectival, 5 p.m. - 9 p.m.

There's plenty for the entire family to enjoy at BugFest, but the **Evening Insectival** will take on a more adult flair from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. with more grown-up activities than ever before. Bring out the competitor in you at the Stag Beetle Battles, where people dress up like beetles and battle it out on a pedestal joust. Check out the Beehive hairdo contest courtesy of Marigold Parlour, and lots of live music. On the plaza, live music continues on the Jones Street stage and visitors can participate in evening bug hunts every 20 minutes starting at 7 p.m. Folks with a good pitching arm can test their skills as they try to dunk the Museum's own Dr. Dan Dombrowski in the plaza dunking booth.

BugFest 2008 is sponsored by Terminix Companies of Eastern North Carolina. The Museum is located in downtown Raleigh on Bicentennial Plaza at 11 West Jones Street. For more information visit bugfest.org or call Kari Wouk at 919-733-7450, ext. 502 or Liz Jones at 919-733-7450, ext. 523.

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The North Carolina State Museum of Natural Sciences, in downtown Raleigh, documents and interprets the natural history of the state of North Carolina through exhibits, research, collections, publications, and educational programming. Hours: Mon.-Sat., 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Sun., noon to 5 p.m. Admission is free. Visit the Museum on the web at naturalsciences.org. The Museum is an agency of the N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources, William G. Ross Jr., Secretary.

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