

**Brains On (APM) | Brains On! Why are giraffe tongues blue? - a Moment of Um extra**  
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MOLLY BLOOM: Hi, friends. Molly here with a few quick updates for you. Number 1, *Brains On* will be back in your feeds on February 1 with a big show all about the multiverse. Number 2, we're working on an episode all about worms, and we want to hear from you. What name would you give to a pet worm? Record your answer and send it to us at [brainson.org/contact](https://brainson.org/contact).

And now, for number 3, the biggest update of all, our brandnew *Moment of Um* podcast is here. Listen in your favorite podcast player, on the *Brains On* YouTube page, or at [MomentofUm.org](https://MomentofUm.org). Plus, you can check out an episode right here right now. I'm not going to spoil it, but it's about a certain long-necked mammal. Check it out.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

**MARC** From the brains behind *Brains On*, this is the *Moment of Um*.

**SANCHEZ:**

[SAYING UM]

Welcome to your *Moment of Um* from APM Studios. I'm Marc Sanchez. Today, we're headed into the wild, not quite an African safari, but sort of. Let's go to the North Carolina Zoo.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

**THEME:** Um.

**MARC** They have lions and tigers and bears and, oh my, they have a Steve.

**SANCHEZ:**

**STEVE GERKIN:** Steve Gerkin. And I'm the Interpretive Programs manager here at the North Carolina Zoo.

**MARC** With that kind of job, Steve gets to know about all the animals in the zoo. So we thought he could help us with  
**SANCHEZ:** this question.

**AMOJA:** My name is Amoja from Wilmington, Delaware. My question is why are giraffes' tongues blue?

[MUSIC PLAYING]

**STEVE GERKIN:** The giraffe's tongue is really amazing. People always ask what color is it? Well, it depends what part of the tongue you're looking at. The tip of the tongue is a little darker. So it's kind of almost a black, deep purple, and it kind of goes into a dark blue. And then inside the mouth is actually pink, just like yours and mine.

Imagine yourself. You're out in the sun playing, having a great time, getting dirty. But you've got to be careful, right, because you can't just be out in the sun. You have to put what on? You put sunscreen on, right? Well, giraffes can't do that, and they're sticking that long tongue out all day long to grab leaves. So it's full of melanin, and that keeps it from getting sunburned, believe it or not. At least, that's the assumption.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

The other really cool thing about a giraffe tongue, it's not like yours and mine. It's covered in thick slime because they're reaching for leaves, and those leaves are protected by thorns. So that slime actually protects the tongue from being stuck by a thorn.

[SAYING UM]

**MARC SANCHEZ:** Melanin is a pigment in our cells that makes our hair and skin different colors. Humans have it and so do giraffes. Melanin also helps block out ultraviolet rays that the sun gives off. But that's not all we have in common with giraffes. We have the same necks. Well, sort of.

It may be hard to believe, but giraffes and humans both have the same seven neck bones. Admittedly, the bones in a giraffe's neck are much bigger. I mean, if I had a giraffe neck, I could go to a concert and stand in the back row and still have a perfect view. Oh yeah. I'll have to remember to duck when I go through the doorways though.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

If you like this episode, take a second to follow *Moment of Um* wherever you listen to podcasts. You can also subscribe to the show on YouTube. Just search for *Brains On*, and you'll find us. And if you just can't wait to hear more, more, more, check out the *Brains On* podcast. That's where, for example, you can find out how our tongues taste stuff. If you have a *Moment of Um* question, bring it on. We would love to help you answer it. Drop us a line by going to [BrainsOn.org/contact](https://BrainsOn.org/contact). Its [BrainsOn.org/contact](https://BrainsOn.org/contact) with all your *Moment of Um* questions. OK, talk to you soon. And until then, um.

[SAYING UM]

**MOLLY BLOOM:** See you on February 1 for our multiverse episode, and don't forget to subscribe to *Moment of Um* in your podcast app. Thanks for listening.