

# I Love Axolotls!

By Charlotte Laing



Charlotte with axolotls at the Beardsley Zoo in Bridgeport, CT

## Axolotls by Charlotte

*Ambystoma mexicanum*  
(from Wikipedia.com)

----- CHARLOTTE LAING

The axolotl is a kind of amphibian, specifically a salamander, that does not metamorphose naturally.

Usually, amphibians have gills and live underwater when they are young, but then they lose their gills, develop lungs, and live on land as adults.

Axolotls, however, keep their gills and continue living in the water as adults. Their gills are their most recognizable trait because they look like wispy feathers.

Axolotls also develop lungs. Although their main method of breathing is through their gills, they occasionally use their lungs to breathe in air from the water's surface. Because they live in water their whole lives, they always have a tail and webbed feet for swimming.

Axolotls average 23 cm (9 in.) in length. They vary in color from pinkish to brownish green, and often appear to be smiling because of the shape of their mouth.

In the wild, axolotls are only found in one lake outside Mexico City, called Lake Xochimilco.

They will eat just about anything they can catch, including fish, worms, mollusks, and even insects on the surface of the water. They are preyed upon by perch and tilapia, both of which are invasive species, as well as birds.

In captivity, axolotls are very popular. They can be found in homes and aquariums all over the world. This is because they are hardy, easy to breed, and cute enough that many people want to own one.

The axolotl has the extraordinary ability to regrow missing body parts. That means that if an axolotl loses a leg or a tail, it will regrow, including the bones, muscle, and skin. They can also regrow organs.

### Why I like axolotls

The inside story

----- CHARLOTTE LAING

Axolotls are really cute and I love them, especially the pink ones.

The axolotl in the picture with me is called Axolotl Rose.



I love this one!



This is very cute!