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GENTLE.NEWS

In Today's Edition

"Maybe everyone can live beyond what they're capable of."

— Markus Zusak

NASA Engineers Work Hard to Protect Moon Explorers

NASA is getting ready to send astronauts back to the Moon. But first, engineers must solve a tricky problem: Moon dust.

Moon dust is not like the soft sand on a beach. It is sharp and rough. It sticks to everything it touches. It could damage spacesuits and equipment on the Moon. Scientists want to make sure astronauts stay safe.

At NASA's Johnson Space Center in Houston, there is a special testing facility. Engineers there work to find ways to protect astronauts from Moon dust. They use special chambers that copy the conditions on the Moon. Inside, they test suits, tools, and spacecraft parts.

One exciting new tool helps brush away dust using electricity. Engineers test it carefully in the special chambers. They also test how moving parts will hold up when dust gets inside them. Every part must be ready before astronauts set foot on the Moon.

This work is part of NASA's Artemis program. It is an exciting mission to return humans to the Moon. Thanks to these careful tests, astronauts will be safer than ever. The dream of living and working on the Moon is getting closer every day.

Source: NASA

Meet the Man Helping NASA Return to the Moon

NASA is working on its Artemis program. The goal is to send astronauts back to the Moon. One key person making this happen is Tom Percy.

Tom works for NASA as an engineering manager. His job is to make sure all the spacecraft parts work well together. Two companies are building the landers that will carry astronauts. Tom works closely with both of them every day.

Tom grew up in Massachusetts. He studied mechanical engineering in college in New York. While still a student, he led an engineering club. The club decided to enter a fun competition.

The contest was called the Great Moonbuggy Race. Students had to design and build a small rover. Tom's team built their rover and traveled south to Huntsville, Alabama for the big event. That was Tom's first time hearing about NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center there.

Today, Tom works right near that same center. He helps make sure astronauts will travel safely to the Moon. "All the landing system work lands on my desk," Tom said with a smile. He is proud to be part of this exciting new chapter in space exploration.

Source: NASA

Restored Creek Gives Baby Salmon a Healthy Head Start

Scientists have great news about salmon in California. A special project is helping young salmon grow bigger and stronger than ever before.

Years ago, Prairie Creek in Northern California had a lumber mill on its banks. The land was changed back into natural wetlands and ponds. Now young salmon have a safe, quiet place to rest and feed.

Baby salmon need time in freshwater before swimming to the ocean. The bigger and healthier they grow, the better their chances of surviving ocean life. Scientists found that the young salmon using this restored habitat are growing faster than before.

Researchers wade into the creek each fall to gently catch young salmon. They measure each fish and give it a tiny microchip, no bigger than a grain of rice. These chips help track where the fish go and how well they are doing.

The results are very encouraging. More young salmon are surviving their ocean journey and returning home as adults. Scientists say this project is a wonderful example of how restoring nature can make a real difference for wildlife.

Source: NOAA Fisheries

Hawaii's Amazing Volcano Puts On a Lava Show

Hawaii's Kīlauea volcano has been putting on a remarkable show since December 2024. The volcano shoots fountains of lava high into the sky. These fiery fountains are truly a wonder of nature.

Scientists have counted 52 separate fountain episodes so far. The fountains happen about every 11 days. Their heights have ranged from 130 feet all the way up to 1,770 feet tall. That is taller than many skyscrapers!

Researcher Heather Winslow is studying why some fountains grow taller than others. She works with the U.S. Geological Survey in Hawaii. Scientists have noticed the fountains grow in repeating cycles. They get taller, then drop, then grow again. It may be starting a fourth such cycle now.

One clue comes from the chemistry of the lava itself. Hotter, fresher magma contains more of a mineral called magnesium. Scientists collect tiny bits of cooled lava to study it. This helps them understand what is happening deep underground.

Nature still holds many surprises. Each new fountain episode teaches scientists something fresh. Their work helps us understand our amazing, living planet a little better every day.

Source: U.S. Geological Survey

Scientists Help Plants Use Less Fertilizer

Scientists have made an exciting discovery about how plants eat. Just like people, plants know when they have had enough food. Researchers found the part inside plants that signals when they are full.

Plants need a nutrient called nitrogen to grow strong and healthy. Farmers spread fertilizer on their fields to give plants this nitrogen. But plants only use about half of the fertilizer they receive. The rest washes into rivers and streams, which can harm fish and wildlife.

A team of scientists at New York University led this important work. They found a tiny switch inside plants that controls how much nitrogen a plant takes in. When the plant has enough, this switch tells it to stop absorbing more.

This discovery could help farmers use less fertilizer on their crops. Using less fertilizer is better for our rivers, lakes, and the air we breathe. It could also make growing food less expensive for farmers around the world.

Scientists hope to use this knowledge to grow smarter, stronger plants. These future plants could feed more people while being kinder to our planet. It is a wonderful example of how science helps both people and nature thrive together.

Source: Futurity.org

Activity Time - Word Search

Find the words below in the puzzle. Words go across or down only.

Words to Find:

FOUNTAIN PLANTS ROVER MAGMA

CROPS MOON POND

N	I	N	F	O	U	N	T	A	I	N
E	E	U	H	M	T	V	D	V	T	C
E	L	N	X	R	O	V	E	R	Z	R
H	Q	J	Q	Y	Y	X	N	O	E	O
R	A	O	M	O	O	N	B	Y	W	P
K	N	P	M	A	G	M	A	V	P	S
X	L	H	I	J	S	X	T	U	O	A
Y	V	R	Y	K	L	J	G	T	N	K
A	T	X	M	M	V	V	B	P	D	G
B	S	D	F	P	L	A	N	T	S	S
Y	M	Z	C	V	M	S	M	M	Q	E