

GENTLE.NEWS

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"Tell me and I forget, teach me and I may remember, involve me and I learn."

— Benjamin Franklin

The Amazing Spider Crater of Australia

Deep in the Australian outback, there is a giant crater that looks just like a spider. It is called Spider Crater, and it is truly one of nature's most amazing sights.

Long ago, a meteorite crashed into the earth in Western Australia. That powerful impact left behind a huge oval-shaped hole. Over hundreds of millions of years, wind and rain slowly shaped it into something remarkable. Today it looks like a giant spider spreading its legs across the land.

The crater is enormous. It measures about 8 miles wide and 7 miles long. The spidery center part stretches about 2.5 miles across. The "legs" are actually ridges of pale sandstone rock. These tough ridges survived while softer rock around them wore away over time.

A NASA satellite recently took a stunning photo of Spider Crater from space. The picture clearly shows the spider shape from high above. Scientists have studied this crater for many years. They found special fan-shaped cracks in the rock called shatter cones. Only a powerful meteorite strike can create these cracks.

Researchers have also examined tiny crystals from the sandstone to learn more. Each discovery helps tell the story of that ancient crash. It is

wonderful to think that something so beautiful came from such a dramatic moment in Earth's long history.

Rescued Seal Pearl Finds Her Forever Home

A sweet young seal named Pearl has found a loving forever home at an aquarium in Connecticut. She is a gray seal, just two years old, with a beautiful shiny silver coat. That shiny coat is how she got her name.

Pearl needed extra help because her spine did not grow in a straight line. This made it hard for her to swim and hunt on her own in the wild. She needed people to step in and care for her.

It all started when kind beachgoers in New York spotted Pearl and knew she needed help. They called a rescue hotline right away. A team came quickly and brought her to a special animal hospital to get better.

Doctors and scientists worked hard to learn Pearl's story. They found clues showing she had been helped before by caring people at another aquarium. Pearl had already touched many hearts on her journey.

Now Pearl lives safely at the Maritime Aquarium in Norwalk, Connecticut. Trained staff care for her every day. She will never have to struggle alone again. Pearl is proof that when people work together, wonderful things can happen for animals who need us most.

Smart Computer Cuts Air Research Time From Days to Hours

Scientists have made a big breakthrough in studying air pollution. A new computer tool now does in 10 hours what used to take 44 hours. That is a huge time savings for important research.

The tool is called X-AutoMap. It works with a special X-ray microscope. The microscope looks at tiny particles in the air. These particles are so small you cannot see them with your eyes alone.

Before this new tool, scientists had to find each tiny particle by hand. That took many days of hard work. Now the computer finds the particles on its own. It works faster and more carefully than before.

A college student named Carlos DeLeon helped create this tool. He worked at a science lab in New York. His work made a real difference. It is wonderful when young people help solve big problems.

This research helps scientists learn how air pollution affects our health. The better we understand tiny particles, the better we can protect people. This smart new tool will help researchers around the world do their work faster and more easily than ever before.

Space Mission Sends Brain and Plant Research to Stars

A rocket is heading to space with some very exciting science on board. It is carrying experiments that could help people stay healthier here on Earth and in space.

One experiment sends tiny models of the human brain into space. These models are grown in a lab. Scientists will compare them to identical models kept on Earth. This will help researchers learn how space affects the brain. The findings may one day help doctors protect brain health for all of us.

Another experiment looks at plants grown in space. Scientists want to know if crop diseases spread differently without gravity. By studying this, they hope to grow stronger, more disease-resistant plants. Better crops in space mean better food for astronauts on long journeys.

Healthy plants do even more good. They absorb carbon dioxide and produce fresh oxygen. They also help recycle water. These benefits will matter more and more as people travel farther into space.

All of this research starts in space but helps life on Earth. Scientists are learning new things every day. Each discovery brings hope for a healthier future for everyone.

Smart Program Turns Scallops Into Ocean Research Funding

Scientists have found a clever way to study the ocean without spending government money. A program called the Scallop Research Set-Aside lets researchers earn their funding by harvesting scallops.

Here is how it works. Instead of getting grant money, researchers receive the right to harvest sea scallops. They work side by side with fishing crews to collect data and bring in the catch. The scallops they sell pay for the research.

This year, 14 new projects were approved. Researchers received rights to harvest over 1.5 million pounds of Atlantic sea scallops. At around \$16 per pound, that adds up to more than \$25 million in total value.

Six million dollars from the harvest will fund ocean research directly. The rest goes to fishing families and small boat owners who help with the work. It is a true team effort between scientists and the fishing community.

The United States has the largest wild scallop fishery in the entire world. In 2025, American fishermen landed over 23 million pounds of scallops worth \$417 million. This smart program helps protect that treasure for future generations while building strong bonds between researchers and the sea.

Activity Time - Word Search

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

Words to Find:

AQUARIUM

PARTICLE

HARVEST

METEOR

SPACE

PEARL

XRAY

