

### Science Snippets 6:

Welcome to our last science newsletter of the term, we hope you have enjoyed them. As well as a quick round-up of some of the more interesting science going on this week, there are some links to fun activities that you might like to have a go at over the summer break. Have lots of fun and we look forward to seeing you all soon.

### Things to have a go at:

There are a whole host of things you can do this summer, whether in your back garden or while out on a walk. Why not try making a bug hotel (<https://www.rspb.org.uk/get-involved/activities/give-nature-a-home-in-your-garden/garden-activities/build-a-bug-hotel/>), join in the national butterfly survey (<https://bigbutterflycount.butterfly-conservation.org/>), become an Insect Champion ([https://ptes.org/insectchampion-fb/?fbclid=IwAR1wmHyK9fM-MqDI5A4u04\\_s1WRJJyexxO4g0E-mSGnzZPnj5Eplpaqp7G8](https://ptes.org/insectchampion-fb/?fbclid=IwAR1wmHyK9fM-MqDI5A4u04_s1WRJJyexxO4g0E-mSGnzZPnj5Eplpaqp7G8)), or join in the National Space Centre's family movie night (<https://spacecentre.co.uk/event/space-race-week/>)? You can also learn about UK astronomy and what is going on in our night skies this month at the National Schools' Observatory, which has activities and lots of useful information (<https://www.schoolobservatory.org/discover>). There are also lots of citizen science projects to get involved in, where scientists ask the public to help them spot asteroids, find new planets around distant stars, survey wildlife in the Serengeti and other nature reserves around the world, or decipher historical journals and notebooks – do seek an adults permission before signing up – maybe you can get them involved too ! (<https://www.zooniverse.org/projects>).

### Ancient arctic flower revived:

The world record for the oldest plant to be revived is shattered, thanks to modern plant propagation techniques. Sometimes, ancient seeds are preserved on lake beds, or in food caches for people or even rodents. Seeds are incredibly successful time capsules, with the oldest known plants to be revived including a 1,300 year old sacred lotus seed from China, and a 2,000 year old Judean date palm seed, a species that was thought to have gone extinct in the fifteenth century ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oldest\\_viable\\_seed](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oldest_viable_seed)), although some claim it died out during Roman times.

Now that record has been blown out of the water, with the revival of an arctic plant, the narrow-leaved campion, from fruit that had been frozen in the Siberian permafrost for a staggering 32,000 years! Although the seed was no longer able to germinate, the scientists were able to use modern micro-propagation techniques (used in horticulture to bulk up stock of new plant varieties quickly) to clone cells from the preserved fruit ([https://www.earthymission.com/scientists-revive-32000-year-old-plant-siberia-permafrost/?fbclid=IwAR0HrdYUFTfOU9uv9W\\_I2Dy-IUPyWm5mHjxAKEmT5w15saw56F4WdspA7VM](https://www.earthymission.com/scientists-revive-32000-year-old-plant-siberia-permafrost/?fbclid=IwAR0HrdYUFTfOU9uv9W_I2Dy-IUPyWm5mHjxAKEmT5w15saw56F4WdspA7VM)). The plants grown this way have now flowered and set seed, showing that this technique has the potential to revive ancient species that may not have seeds currently stored in places like the Millennium Seed Bank.

### Snakes don't need planes!

A surprising number of forest animals are able to glide through the air, from flying squirrels to tree frog. There are even a few snakes that can glide by flattening their bodies and wriggling as they go. Intrigued by why such seemingly non-aerodynamic creatures don't just tumble through the air like a bit of thrown rope, researchers at the Applied Physics Lab in America used high-speed cameras and computer modelling to study these aerobatic snakes, and found that the way they wriggle as they glide is essential to keeping them stable in the air and travelling over 10m in a single leap! You can see their video of gliding snakes here: <https://www.sciencenews.org/article/how-flying-snakes-stay-aloft>