COOL IMAGES

Apple Crisp

Next time you bite into a nice crunchy apple, you can thank a landscape of cellulose fibers like this one (left) for the texture your mouth feels. The image, a bit of apple cell wall just 1 micrometer on a side, was taken with an atomic force microscope and later tinted green. A team at the Institute of Food Research (IFR) in Norwich, United Kingdom, probes food molecules to help figure out what makes things taste good—or bad; their IFR colleagues use the info to develop foods that are tastier, more nutritious, and resist spoilage better. Visit the group's Web site* for close-ups of all sorts of structures in and on foods: from long sinewy carrageenan, a polysaccharide used to hold ice cream together, to icky films of bacteria.

* www.ifrn.bbsrc.ac.uk/FQM/SPM/images.html

SITE VISIT

Trilobitten

Paleontologists and amateur fossil hunters share a passion for trilobites, the many-legged marine arthropod that evolved during the Cambrian period and flourished for 300 million years. All those generations left plenty of fossils, making trilobites some of the most widely studied extinct creatures for understanding how species fill niches and diversify. "Kevin's Trilobite Home Page" pulls together a range of trilobite arcana, from the latest conference proceedings to a huge collection of fossil photos.

www.ualberta.ca/~kbrett/Trilobites.html

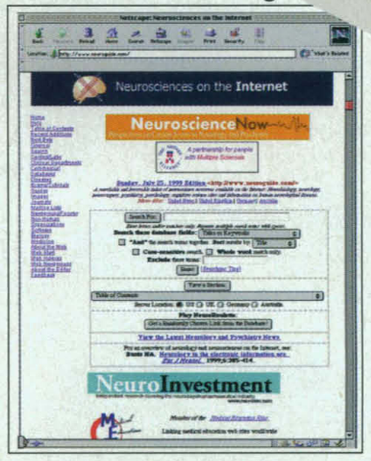
Webmaster Kevin Brett, a grad student in earth and atmospheric sciences at the University of Alberta in Edmonton, says his aim is to catalog "all things trilobitological." You'll find the most recent taxonomy of the class Trilobita down to the family level; an extensive bibliography; tips on buying fossils; and links to museums, journals, excavation sites, and clubs that focus on the erstwhile critter. Hungry for more? The site directs you to a source for chocolate trilobites. You can even check out lyrics from English pop singer Robyn Hitchcock's ode, "Trilobite": "Basking on the shores of time, the little stone creature ain't dead to the world. They call him trilobite. ..." Besides linking to scores of trilobite sites, Brett runs a "Paleo Ring" that connects hundreds of paleontology Web sites.

SITE VISIT

Internet on the Brain

Curious about how Escheresque visual illusions work, or want to get a rundown on experimental treatments for Alzheimer's disease? If so, consider paying a visit to what may be the most comprehensive guide to neuroscience holdings on the Web. Uncluttered with complex images or java applets out of respect for those encumbered by slow browsers, Neurosciences on the Internet provides a host of links to professional journals, psychiatry and neurology news services, image galleries, and a list of medical centers that can help you find top neurologists around the world.

neuroguide.com



Webmaster and neurologist Neil A. Busis of the University of Pittsburgh says he started compiling neuro sites in 1994, before the advent of the search engine. Emerging medical and research sites were hard to find, he says, adding, "I wanted to do something to help people." Sites related to human disease get the most traffic, which to Busis suggests that many patients are tapping into the site for background info on their own conditions. And for the pros' edification, the site links to a continuing medical education course, created by Busis, that teaches neurologists how to hone their craft with the help of the Internet.

HOT PICKS

Lab's little instruction book. For an exhaustive rundown on the hottest methods in molecular and cell biology, click over to Protocol Online. The site links to hundreds of protocols from commercial and research labs and hosts a helpful Q&A forum. www.protocol-online.net

Ray of first light. Bookmark this site to catch the first pics from the Chandra X-ray Observatory, the massive space telescope that should beam down its "first light" image (of a supernova remnant) by mid-September, if not sooner. The site also offers loads of background on Chandra, including interviews with scientists, videos of last month's launch, and links to other sites. www.xraytelescope.com

Crystal ball. Structural biologists will no doubt find invaluable this new online guide to high-energy synchrotron facilities around the world. It includes data on beam capabilities, schedules, application info, contacts, even pointers to nearby hotels. biosync.sdsc.edu