

## RESOURCES

### Trees That Time Forgot

The plants known as cycads belong to an ancient, once-thriving lineage that has fallen on hard times. Although far outnumbered today by flowering plants and limited to warm climates, cycads intrigue evolutionary biologists because they are the closest relatives of the group that includes all other seed-producing plants. Meet all 250-odd extant cycad species at the Cycad Pages, hosted by the Royal Botanic Gardens in Sydney, Australia.

Dinosaurs munched on the leaves of these palm look-alikes, whose fossils date back more than 250 million years. Introductory pages describe their evolutionary history and taxonomy and explore their close partnership with nitrogen-fixing bacteria. The site's World List of Cycads, a lush compendium of all named species, provides full descriptions, details of natural history, range maps, key references, and info on conservation status. With their slow growth, limited range, and often specialized habitat requirements, cycads are particularly vulnerable to extinction.

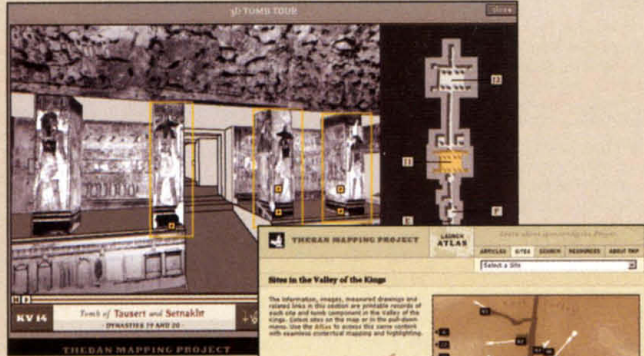
[plantnet.rbgsyd.gov.au/PlantNet/cycad/index.html](http://plantnet.rbgsyd.gov.au/PlantNet/cycad/index.html)

## DISTRIBUTED COMPUTING

### Gene Network

Looking for a way to donate your spare computer cycles to science? Then join Genome@home. The Stanford University project aims to craft novel genes that might help researchers design new drugs and better understand the function and evolution of known genes. Concocting DNA strands that will make a working protein requires hefty computing power. Like the SETI@home project that scans for extraterrestrial messages, Genome@home links idle desktop machines to create a virtual supercomputer.

[genomeathome.stanford.edu](http://genomeathome.stanford.edu)



## EXHIBITS

### Tombs With a View

Long before Westminster Abbey and Arlington National Cemetery, there was the Valley of the Kings, where for more than 500 years the ancient Egyptians enshrined their illustrious dead in sumptuous tombs. Tour the valley with this multimedia atlas from the Theban Mapping Project, an international effort to document the geology and archaeological treasures of this part of Egypt, many of which are crumbling due to pollution, floods, looters, heavy-footed tourists, and age.

Sixty-two tombs puncture the walls of the valley or lie nearby, including King Tutankhamen's, one of the few not pillaged before archaeologists could excavate. The Atlas, a huge expansion of an existing Web site, lets you explore each burial by calling up and manipulating floor plans and 3D reconstructions, browsing a photo gallery, and watching a film narrated by Egyptologist Kent Weeks, director of the project. Weeks also leads a tour into the depths of a rare double tomb, built for the pharaoh Tausert around 3200 years ago but hastily refurbished to hold the body of her successor Setnakht. Combining photographs with computer reconstructions based on precise laser measurements, the exploration reveals the tomb's grandeur and uncovers some shortcuts the builders took during renovation.

[www.thebanmappingproject.com](http://www.thebanmappingproject.com)

## TOOLS

### Silicon Servant

Tracking down basic data on proteins can be a dull scavenger hunt, as you jump from site to site picking up snippets of information. Delegate this tedious chore to the Molecular Information Agent, a search program from the San Diego Supercomputer Center. The agent scours more than 50 databases, including sequence storehouses such as SWISS-PROT and GenBank, structural collections such as the Protein Data Bank, and PubMed. The center will store the results or send them to you by e-mail.

[mia.sdsc.edu](http://mia.sdsc.edu)

## IMAGES

### Chronicle of an Eruption

A rivulet of lava from the dazzling and sometimes deadly Kilauea volcano tumbles into the sea (right). The Hawaiian volcano has wowed tourists and volcanologists this year, and you can follow the fireworks at this site from the U.S. Geological Survey's Hawaiian Volcano Observatory, which sits at the edge of Kilauea's crater. Scientists there post daily on-the-spot reports, eye-catching photos, video, maps, and data such as readings from tiltmeters that monitor the slope of the ground, an indicator of lava buildup beneath the summit. Kilauea's current outburst began in 1983, and the volcano has been leaking lava almost continually for the last 16 years. Kilauea is one of the easiest volcanoes to study, and research there might clarify questions such as how volcanic emissions influence global temperatures and contribute to air pollution.

[hvo.wr.usgs.gov/kilauea/update](http://hvo.wr.usgs.gov/kilauea/update)

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