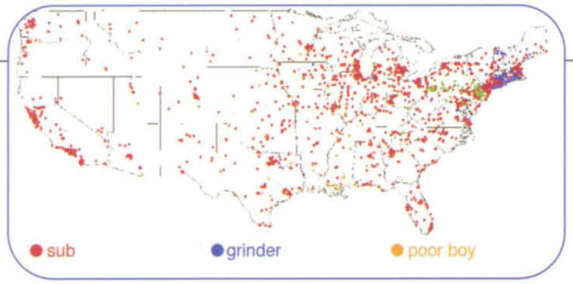


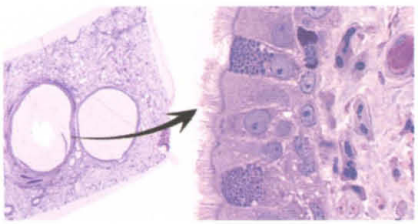
SURVEY

Regionally Speaking

What do you call the tasty crustacean that graces your gumbo? In the Midwest, it's a crawdad; in the Northeast, a crayfish or crawfish. Find out more about how words are used and pronounced at a new Web site that tracks linguistic trends across the United States.

This site summarizes the results of a dialect survey of students and Web visitors conducted by linguist Bert Vaux and colleagues at Harvard University. Color-coded maps show the geographic distribution of responses to 122 questions asked of more than 5300 participants. Questions run the gamut from how to pronounce "aunt" and "caramel" to what you would call a long sandwich containing cold cuts. To most, it's a sub, but in New Orleans you will be ordering a poor boy and in Boston, a grinder (see map, top).

www.hcs.harvard.edu/~golder/dialect

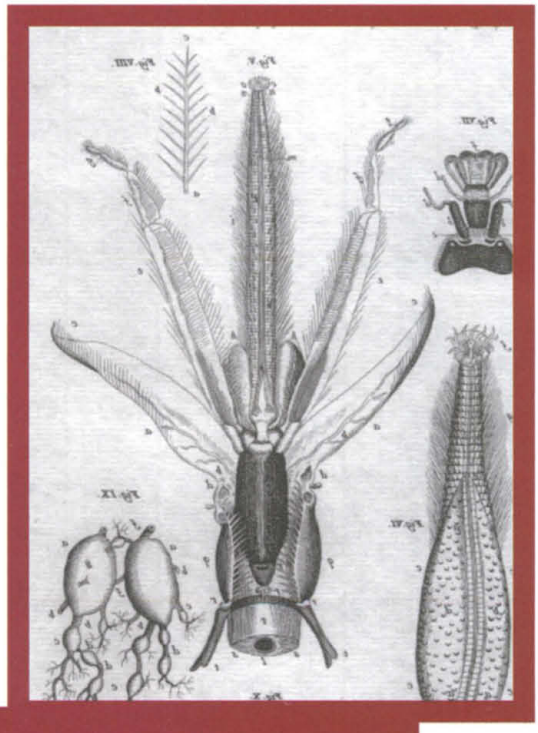


IMAGES

Tissue Boxes

Medical students and others wading through basic histology or pathology might want to check out these two Web sites brimming with photos of cell types and organ systems. At the new Atlas of Histology* from the University of Illinois College of Medicine at Urbana-Champaign, which includes more than 3000 slides, users can zoom in on finer and finer images to see the details of structures [above, a dog's bronchus (left image) and the lining magnified 2500 times]. The Virtual Slidebox† from the University of Iowa School of Medicine in Iowa City offers similar images that can be magnified up to 40 times.

* www.histo.net
† www.path.uiowa.edu/virtualslidebox



EXHIBIT

Explorer of the Natural World

Insect larvae taste unpleasantly like "rusty bacon," according to 17th century Dutch microscopist Jan Swammerdam. But they are slightly tastier when cooked, he writes. A new Web site describes the work of this pioneering scientist known for his insight into everything from insect life stages to nerve function and the mechanics of the penile erection.

This tour through Swammerdam's life and work delves into accomplishments such as detailed dissections (above, a bee) and a still-used system of insect classification. He is also credited with the first description of insect reproduction and metamorphosis. The site also explores Swammerdam in his historical context. According to the site's developer, biologist Matthew Cobb of the University of Manchester, U.K., Swammerdam was torn between mystical religious feelings and his commitment to the new experimental science. But most importantly, the site brings Swammerdam's passion for the natural world alive. Take his description of a postcoital snail that retires to its shell "until the furious lust of generation gathers new strength, and effaces the memory of the uneasiness suffered after the former coition."

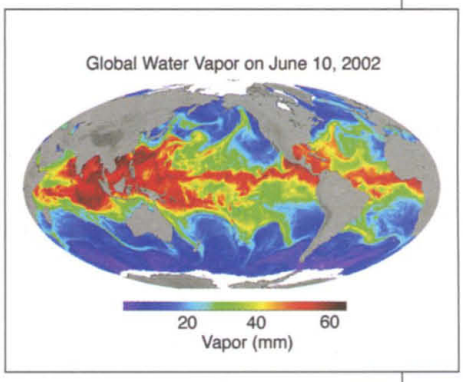
www.janswammerdam.net

DATABASE

Earth, Wind, and Water

By detecting microwaves that radiate naturally from Earth and scatter in the atmosphere, satellites can build a picture of temperatures, rain and snow cover, and wind speed. A NASA-sponsored site serves up globe-spanning images made from these "passive microwave" data.

With user-friendly viewers, you can track the latest typhoon or hurricane churning across the Pacific or the Caribbean. Global maps of sea-surface temperature, oceanic wind speed, and precipitation go back 5 years. You can also see current global microwave temperatures at sea level or higher in the stratosphere, depending on the wavelength that you click. The Temperature Trends page gives you daily global average temperatures at various altitudes compared to the 20-year average. (So far this year, it's



been about 0.1°C warmer at 1 kilometer.) Run by a collaboration called the Passive Microwave Earth Science Information Partner, the site also offers larger images and full custom data sets for experts.

pm-esip.nsstc.nasa.gov

Send site suggestions to netwatch@aaas.org. Archive: www.sciencemag.org/netwatch

CREDITS: (BOTTOM LEFT) A. KOKKO-CUNNINGHAM/UNIV. OF ILLINOIS COLLEGE OF MEDICINE AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN; (BOTTOM RIGHT) PM-ESIP CENTER