

Scientists say they can grow tea on the Moon

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Scientists have said that it might be possible to grow tea on the Moon. Researchers from the University of Kent in the UK believe the lunar soil is good enough for tea plants to grow in. Lead researcher Professor Nigel Mason said:

"We are at the very earliest stages of research into space agriculture." He added: "It is reassuring that we may be able to provide access to the great British tradition of a tea break." This is good news for astronauts who visit the Moon in the future. They will be able to have a cup of Moon-grown tea. It could also be good news for farmers who struggle to grow crops in poor soil. Researchers hope farmers worldwide will be able to farm even in poor soil.

Professor Mason and his team investigated whether tea plants could grow in lunar and Martian soil. He said: "Our experiments reveal that...plants such as tea may be cultivated in lunar soil within lunar greenhouses, allowing inhabitants of such bases some degree of [independence] and access to fresh food." The researchers planted tea in a special soil they made that is close to the type of soil found on the Moon and on Mars. Fellow researcher Dr Sara Lopez-Gomollon was happy with her findings. She said: "The results of this project are very encouraging, as they demonstrate that tea...can be grown in lunar soil." Unfortunately, the tea plants did not grow in the Martian soil.

Sources: earth.com / phys.org / dailystar.co.uk

Writing

Tea is the best drink when you want to relax.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

scientists / tea / the Moon / soil / plants / research / space / agriculture / astronauts / Mars / greenhouses / inhabitants / independence / fresh food / happy / project / grow

True / False

- 1) Scientists have successfully grown tea on the Moon. T / F
- 2) Scientists say they are just beginning to look into space farming. T / F
- 3) Astronauts may one day be able to have an English-style tea break. T / F
- 4) The research may help farmers who farm in poor soil. T / F
- 5) The researchers looked at growing tea on five different planets. T / F
- 6) There could one day be greenhouses on the Moon. T / F
- 7) Scientists used real soil from the Moon. T / F
- 8) The test tea grew well in Moon-like and Mars-like soil. T / F

Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- | | |
|--------------------------|----------------|
| 1. believe | a. level |
| 2. soil | b. farming |
| 3. agriculture | c. sadly |
| 4. tradition | d. try hard |
| 5. struggle | e. show |
| 6. investigated | f. think |
| 7. reveal | g. hopeful |
| 8. degree | h. earth |
| 9. encouraging | i. looked into |
| 10. unfortunately | j. custom |

Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you think of tea?
- b) What do you think of growing tea on the Moon?
- c) Would you like to eat food grown on the Moon?
- d) What would it be like to be an astronaut?
- e) What do you think of the idea of farms on the Moon?
- f) Why is it important we learn more about space agriculture?
- g) What do you think of the idea of having tea breaks?
- h) How can we help farmers to grow better crops?

Phrase Match

1. it might be possible to
2. lunar soil is good
3. We are at the very earliest
4. the great British tradition
5. for farmers who struggle
6. his team investigated whether
7. plants such as tea may be
8. access to fresh
9. close to the type of soil found
10. The results of this project are very

- a. tea plants could grow
- b. stages of research
- c. on the Moon
- d. cultivated
- e. enough for tea plants to grow in
- f. food
- g. to grow crops
- h. grow tea on the Moon
- i. encouraging
- j. of a tea break

Discussion – Student B

- a) What do you think about what you read?
- b) What kinds of tea do you like and dislike?
- c) Do you think Moon-grown tea would be safe?
- d) Which is better, tea or coffee?
- e) Which is better, green tea or black tea?
- f) What do you think of your country's national drink?
- g) When is the best time to drink tea?
- h) What questions would you like to ask the researchers?

Spelling

1. it might be lpeosbsi to grow tea on the Moon
2. the rl nau soil is good enough for tea plants
3. research into space curiuaertgl
4. we may be able to podeivr access
5. the great British ndritotai of a tea break
6. farmers who elgsrtgu to grow crops
7. whheter tea plants could grow
8. tea may be lcaedttivu
9. nhbtaiatns of such bases
10. some deeeegr of independence
11. very goeucrgnian
12. mdetoranest that tea can be grown

Comprehension Questions

Listen to / read the news article. Answer these questions.
(Answers are on p. 27 of the 27-page PDF.)

1.	What is the name of the university that conducted this research?
2.	What research are scientists in the earliest stages of?
3.	What British tradition was mentioned in the article?
4.	Who might get to enjoy a cup of tea on the moon?
5.	What do some farmers struggle to do?
6.	In what two kinds of soil did scientists try to make tea plants grow?
7.	What could greenhouses on the Moon provide astronauts access to?
8.	How did researcher Dr Sara Lopez-Gomollon feel about her findings?
9.	What did a researcher say about her test results?
10.	In what kind of soil did tea plants not grow?

Speaking – Tea

Rank these with your partner. Put the best at tea the top.
Change partners often and share your rankings.

- English
- Earl Grey
- Green Tea
- Rooibos
- Chamomile
- Oolong
- Jasmine
- Chai