

edited by Mitch Leslie

RESOURCES

Green Law Library

Looking for a comprehensive Web reference on the world's environmental laws? Then mosey over to ECOLEX, a storehouse of information on treaties, national and international court decisions, and legislation sponsored by the United Nations and the World Conservation Union. Browse the records to learn about the latest German ordinance governing genetically modified foods, for example, or to find out whether South Africa has signed any treaties to protect imperiled seals (yes, the 1972 Convention for the Conservation of Antarctic Seals). Entries provide either abstracts or full-text documents.

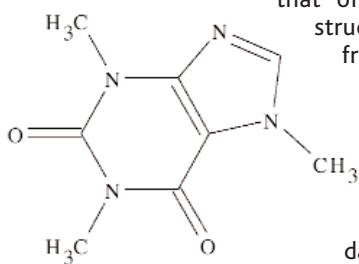
www.ecolex.org/ecolex

DATABASE

Structuring Chemical Safety

To judge whether a new chemical might be poisonous or carcinogenic, toxicologists often need to consult tests on similar compounds. The problem is, toxicity data are scattered in multiple collections that often don't include chemical structures. DSSTox, a new site from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), aims to help scientists and risk assessors analyze public toxicity data by putting the information in a standard format that includes structural data. So far, DSSTox curators have converted four EPA and outside databases; visitors can download and search the files using their own programs. The collections include measurements of hormonelike activity; minnow toxicity assays for more than 600 chemicals, including caffeine (above); and carcinogen tests on more than 1400 compounds. Researchers can also suggest databases for EPA to add to the site.

www.epa.gov/nheerl/dsstox



DATABASE

Genome Timetable

The mustard plant and the zebrafish are done, the water flea should be finished by the end of the year, and the Jamaican fruit-eating bat is still up in the air. That's the status of projects to sequence these organisms' genomes. This new site from the International Sequencing Consortium tracks the progress of sequencing efforts around the world, listing each project's scheduled or actual completion date and what techniques it is using. Links connect to the group performing the work, the funding sources, and, for completed projects, the final sequence.

www.intlgenome.org

RESOURCES

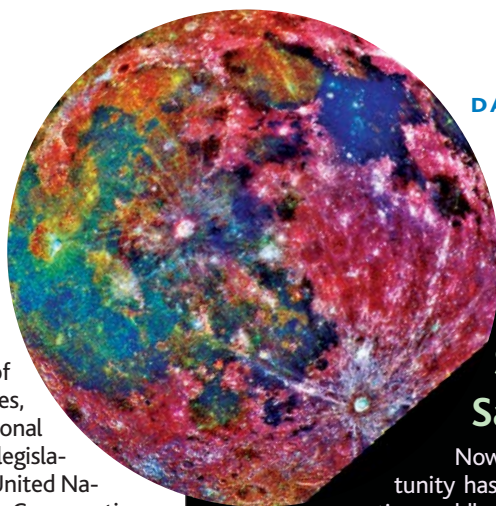
Butterfly Nooks

With more than 110,000 known species, butterfly and moth diversity sets nature photographers' hearts aflutter. Helping taxonomists keep the insects' nomenclature straight is the Butterflies and Moths of the World database* from the Natural History Museum in London, which clarifies the status of more than 31,000 published genus names. There's also a gallery of over 400 specimens representing most of the world's 131 butterfly and moth families.

For the latest developments in butterfly research—from new species to climate-related population declines—check out the LepidopteroLOGY news section† at this site from entomologist Stanislav Abadjiev of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences in Sofia. The site also holds brief biographies of eminent butterfly and moth experts and a synopsis of Balkan families. This small bath white (*Pontia chloridice*, above) is a rare visitor to southern Europe from Asia.

* www.nhm.ac.uk/entomology/butmoth

† www.abadjiev.net/s_a



EDUCATION

Solar System Sampler

Now that the rover Opportunity has spotted the residue of martian puddles, you might be eager to learn more about the Red Planet and the rest of the solar system. Take a jaunt through our neighborhood of space with the nifty graphics on NASA's home page for solar system research. Aimed at students and the public, the site profiles the sun and planets, explaining, for example, why Mercury has such a paltry atmosphere (the planet's high temperatures cook most of it away) and why Uranus is lying on its side (it might have toppled over after crashing into another hefty object). Crammed with photos, animations, and videos, the site's gallery spans 6 decades, from the early rocket designers to this year's shots from the surface of Mars. Visitors can also read about NASA missions such as Galileo, which snapped this false-color photo of our moon in 1992 (above) while traveling to Jupiter.

solarsystem.nasa.gov

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