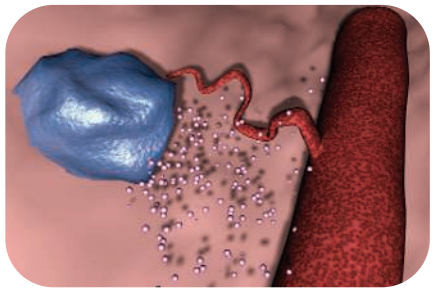
NetWatch

edited by Mitch Leslie

EDUCATION

Cells Gone Wild



Hungry tumor cells send out for dinner, releasing molecules that spur blood vessels to grow toward them (right). Learn more about the insidious ability—known as angiogenesis—and other aspects of cancer biology at this tutorial from lecturer Gregg Orloff of Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia, and contributors. The site is aimed mainly at cancer patients and health care workers but includes plenty of information for students. With an abundance of animations and diagrams, CancerQuest's 13 chapters plumb subjects such as the control of cell division and how defective genes bollix the delicate process. Visitors can also read up on clinical trials and experimental therapies, such as poisons that target only brain cancer cells carrying a particular surface receptor. Orloff is overhauling the site and will soon add new graphics and a timeline of cancer discoveries.

www.cancerquest.org

EDUCATION

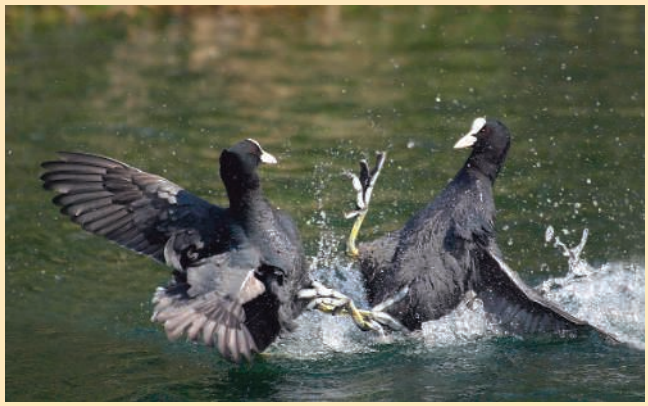
Trapped Forever

Paleontologists prize amber because it serves as a sticky time capsule, entombing organisms from up to 300 million years ago. Archaeologists can use the fossilized tree resin to uncover ancient trade routes. You'll find a cache of amber lore at this site from librarian Susan Ward Aber of Emporia State University in Kansas. Amber forms when organic molecules oozed by trees react with oxygen and polymerize. The site covers topics such as where amber is found today—the Baltic area of Russia and the Dominican Republic are hot spots—and how to identify it. Real amber floats in saltwater, whereas plastic or glass imitations sink. Links at the Life in Amber section create a virtual gallery of animal and plant remains, from a 30-million-year-old grasshopper to the tiny flower of an extinct oak tree.

www.emporia.edu/earthsci/amber/amber.htm

RESOURCES

Britain's Birds



BirdFacts, a new guide from the British Trust for Ornithology, profiles 258 species that frequent or breed in the British Isles, such as the European coot (*Fulica atra*; right). The species accounts are crammed with ecological, anatomical, and conservation data. You'll find results from recent surveys of British and European populations and summaries of long-term trends in the species' numbers. The European coot, for instance, has been slowly increasing in Britain. Distribution maps compare censuses from the 1970s and 1990s and highlight range changes. Although it focuses on Britain, BirdFacts will prove useful for non–U.K. users because many of the species also inhabit Europe and North America.

www.bto.org/birdfacts

TOOLS

Deconstructing Viruses

If you're hunting for tools to analyze virus genomes and proteins, drop by The Viral Bioinformatics Research Center, created by Chris Upton of the University of Victoria in Canada. The site holds sequences for hundreds of viruses in 11 families, such as the Filoviridae, which includes the notorious Ebola virus (right). You can parse the data using 10 Java tools; for example, the Base by Base program lets users compare viral genome sequences one nucleotide at a time. The site also offers background on the different families, describing their structures, life cycles, and how they hijack cellular activities. To learn more about some viral illnesses, download chapters from an infectious disease text.

athena.bioc.uvic.ca

DATABASE

Atlas of Other Worlds

They range from gas behemoths that dwarf Jupiter to a dainty body only about six times bulkier than Earth. Since the first one was detected a decade ago, the number of confirmed planets outside our solar system has climbed to more than 160, according to this database from Jean Schneider of the Paris Observatory in France. The Extrasolar Planets Encyclopaedia compiles vital statistics for each world, including mass and orbital axis, along with data for its parent star, such as spectral type and distance from Earth. The reports come from papers or preprints, conferences, and other planet-tallying sites. Visitors can also peruse a separate rundown of unconfirmed and retracted objects.

www.obspm.fr/planets

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

CREDITS (TOP TO BOTTOM): GREGG ORLOFF; JILL PAKENHAM/BTO; CYNTHIA GOLDSMITH/CDC

Downloaded from www.sciencemag.org on November 22, 2009

Published by AAAS