

The Daily STEM

Volume 2 Issue 21

February 23, 2020

STEM in the News

If you live in a place with snow, you might be wishing it would start melting. One forest plant can actually melt snow so it can begin growing. The skunk cabbage is a plant that produces heat as it grows, and that heat can melt any nearby snow. Even in cold conditions, the plant can be 55°F or more. The warmth also causes it to give off more of its “skunk” smell to attract flies and bees to help with pollination. There’s also another reason to leave the skunk cabbage alone besides the smell. The skunk cabbage is a poisonous plant. To learn more: bit.ly/39MR3m2



STEM + LEGO + Space

Turning an idea for a rocket or satellite into a real satellite or rocket requires a lot of science, technology, engineering, and math. But did you know that it also takes some artists?

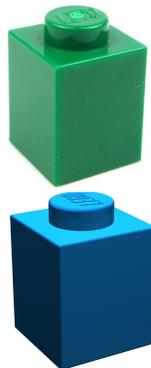


NASA’s Jet Propulsion Laboratory is where designs and ideas for space are created. However, to make sure that the ideas will actually work, there’s a team of artists that build models of the ideas first. The people of the Left Field studio must “rapid prototype” models of ideas using paper, cardboard, LEGOs, Play-Doh, and other supplies. They work with “scientists and engineers to help them formalize their thoughts, participating in design sessions for future missions,” says Daniel Goods, the artist who started the studio. If they find a problem with a design, they let the researchers know so they can change their plans. What supplies would you need to make prototypes of spacecraft?

To learn more: bit.ly/2VblBtv

STEM Challenge

Do you enjoy building with LEGO bricks? It’s fun to build something, take it apart, and then re-use the pieces in a completely different way. Try one of these challenges with some friends and some LEGOs:

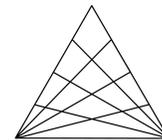


- Give each person the exact same bricks (25, 50, or 100) and see who can make the biggest or best item
- Pick a category (space, house, animal, invention, etc) and see who can make the best item
- Pick 20 blocks and see how many different items you can make from just those blocks
- Try to build the tallest building that’s no bigger than 4x4 at the base

The Puzzle

Suppose you have 5 LEGO blocks, all of them 1x1, but each a different color (red, blue, green, yellow, and white). How many ways can you stack them together (they must connect)?

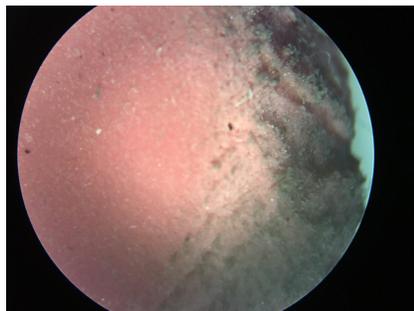
Last week’s answer:
There were 64 triangles



Mystery Photo

What’s under the microscope?
(answer in next issue)

Last issue’s answer:
A Key



Incredible Inventions

Do you know who invented LEGOs? Ole Kirk Christiansen was a Danish toymaker who grew up enjoying whittling wood. He started a company making wooden ladders, stools, and ironing boards, but he really liked making toys. Thanks to 3 fires in his shops, he eventually switched to making plastic toys instead of wood. Those became the LEGO blocks we use today! Learn more: bit.ly/2VaUE9h

