



PRESS RELEASE

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The Hastings Academy to grow seeds from space!

Students at The Hastings Academy are preparing to become space biologists and embark on a voyage of discovery by growing seeds that have been into space.

In September, 2kg of rocket seeds were flown to the International Space Station (ISS) on Soyuz 44S where they will spend several months in microgravity before returning to Earth in March 2016. The seeds have been sent as part of Rocket Science, an educational project launched by the RHS Campaign for School Gardening and the UK Space Agency.

The Hastings Academy will be one of up to 10,000 schools to receive a packet of 100 seeds from space, which they will grow alongside seeds that haven't been to space and measure the differences over seven weeks. The students won't know which seed packet contains which seeds until all results have been collected by the RHS Campaign for School Gardening and analysed by professional biostatisticians.

The out-of-this-world, nationwide science experiment will enable the students to think more about how we could preserve human life on another planet in the future, what astronauts need to survive long-term missions in space and the difficulties surrounding growing fresh food in challenging climates.

Dr Scorgie, Head of Science at The Hastings Academy says: "We are very excited to be taking part in Rocket Science. This experiment is a fantastic way of teaching our pupils to think more scientifically and share their findings with the whole school."

Rocket Science is just one educational project from a programme developed by the UK Space Agency to celebrate British ESA astronaut Tim Peake's Principia mission to the ISS and inspire young people to look into careers in STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths) subjects, including horticulture.

Applications to take part in Rocket Science are still open and will close in March next year or until all packs have been allocated. Schools and educational groups can apply at rhs.org.uk/schoolgardening.

Follow the project on Twitter: @RHSSchools #RocketScience

- Ends -

Notes to Editors:

Due to the nature of space travel, there is no guarantee the seeds will return to Earth in the timeframes given.

For more information on the Rocket Science project or RHS Campaign for School Gardening, please contact the Campaign at schoolgardening@rhs.org.uk.

About the RHS Campaign for School Gardening

The RHS Campaign for School Gardening works with over 21,000 schools and groups, representing more than 4.5 million children across the UK, to inspire a love of plants and horticulture. Through our resources, unique competitions and hands-on projects, we support teachers to enhance children's skills and development to meet the needs of the future. Our extensive bank of online resources and national programme of school gardening training courses enthuse teachers and give them skills and confidence to create outdoor learning experiences that impact on children's achievement, health and well-being, whilst supporting the National Curriculum. rhs.org.uk/schoolgardening.

RHS Registered Charity No. 222879/SC038262

About the UK Space Agency

The UK Space Agency is responsible for all strategic decisions on the UK civil space programme and provides a clear, single voice for UK space ambitions. At the heart of UK efforts to explore and benefit from space, we are responsible for ensuring that the UK retains and grows a strategic capability in space-based systems, technologies, science and applications. We lead the UK's civil space programme in order to win sustainable economic growth, secure new scientific knowledge and provide benefit to all citizens.

We work to:

- co-ordinate UK civil space activity
- encourage academic research
- support the UK space industry
- raise the profile of UK space activities at home and abroad
- increase understanding of space science and its practical benefits
- inspire our next generation of UK scientists and engineers
- licence the launch and operation of UK spacecraft
- promote co-operation and participation in the European Space programme

For more information on the UK Space Agency or Principia Mission, please contact Julia Short at julia.short@ukspaceagency.bis.gsi.gov.uk.