TOMATOSPHERE™

Sample Media Release

Tomatosphere™ - Imagine the Possibilities - Your School's Name

Town/City, Date

More than 22 500 classrooms of students from Kindergarten to Grade 12 across the United States and Canada are part of the award-winning Tomatosphere™ program. Tomatosphere™ uses the excitement of space exploration as a context for teaching students the skills and processes of science experimentation and inquiry.
"I expect in twenty years time, astronauts will be flying on missions to Mars - and these future astronauts are in our schools right now," noted Marc Garneau, former Canadian Astronaut and former president of the Canadian Space Agency. Since the proposed Mars journey will take a minimum of two years, growing plants on board the space vehicle will help replenish the food supply, improve the quality of air and water and teach us more about the space environment as well as applications of space-related technologies to Earth.

By participating in Tomatosphere™, students will be dealing with two different types of seeds. One type of seed is a “control” group, which will be used as a basis for comparison with the second set of seeds. The control group consists of Heinz H9478 seeds that have had no exposure to any extraneous conditions. The second set of seeds, a “treatment” group have been to the International Space Station and returned to Earth.

After the seeds have been planted, germinated and results submitted to Tomatosphere™, the students and teachers will receive notification about the nature of each set of seeds – the seeds that have been to the International Space Station, and the control group.

Tomato seeds were chosen for this experiment because tomatoes are a highly nutritious food source, which, if successfully grown in space, could provide food, oxygen and water as well as facilitating the removal of carbon dioxide from the air to help sustain long-term space travel.