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China grows plants on the moon – 17th January, 2019

## Level 0

Plants are growing on the far side of the moon. China's space agency showed photos of cotton seeds growing. It is part of a "moon surface micro-ecological circle". Cotton and potatoes are growing. They are both small and strong. They could grow in the difficult conditions on the moon.

Researchers want to understand how plants grow in space. His team is looking at our future survival in space. They could start a space base. Fruit flies and yeast are part of the project. The plants will make oxygen and food for the fruit flies; the yeast could change the dead plants into more food.

## Level 1

space agency showed photos of seeds sprouting into life. This is part of a project on the far side of the moon. It is called a "moon surface micro-ecological circle". Project leader Liu Hanlong says cotton was the first plant to sprout. He chose cotton and potatoes because they were small, strong and could grow in the difficult conditions on the moon's surface.

Professor Hanlong wants to understand how plants grow in space. He wants plants to grow on the moon. His team is looking at the future survival in space. These plants could allow us to start a space base. The project also includes yeast and fruit flies in a mini-ecosystem. The plants will produce oxygen and food for the fruit flies; the yeast could change the flies' waste and the dead plants into another food source.

## Level 2

For the first time, plants from Earth are growing on the moon. China's space agency showed photos of cotton seeds sprouting into life. It said they were among several plants that were growing. The other plants include potatoes, rock cress and rapeseed. It is part of a Chinese project to the far side of the moon. The project is called a "moon surface micro-ecological circle". Project leader Liu Hanlong says the cotton was the first to sprout. He said he chose the plants because they were small, strong and could grow in the difficult conditions on the moon's surface.

Professor Hanlong said the aim was to understand how plants grow in space and to develop plants that can grow on the moon or in space. The professor said the team is looking at the future survival in space. Learning about these plants growing could allow us to lay the foundation for starting a space base. The project also includes yeast and fruit flies in creating a mini-ecosystem. The plants will produce oxygen and food for the fruit flies; the yeast could change the flies' waste and the dead plants into another kind of food source.

## Level 3

For the first time ever, plants from Earth are growing on the moon. The China National Space Administration showed photos of cotton seeds sprouting into life. The administration said the cotton plants were among several plants that were "growing well". Other plants that are now growing on the moon are potatoes, rock cress and rapeseed. The plants are part of a project on China's space mission to the far side of the moon. The project is called a "moon surface micro-ecological circle". Project leader Liu Hanlong says the cotton seeds were the first to sprout. He said the plants were chosen because they were small, strong and could grow in the difficult conditions on the moon's surface.

Professor Hanlong said the project's aim was to understand more about how plants grow outside of Earth. The long-term aim is to develop plants that can grow on the moon or on planets like Mars. The professor said: "We have given consideration to future survival in space. Learning about these plants growing in a low-gravity environment would allow us to lay the foundation for our future establishment of space base." The project also includes yeast and fruit flies. The professor hopes the six organisms in the project will make up a mini-ecosystem. The plants will produce oxygen and food for the fruit flies, and the yeast could manage the flies' waste and the dead plants to provide another food source.