



The Science & Technology Hotline

## Great Science Opportunities Coming To Medicine Hat

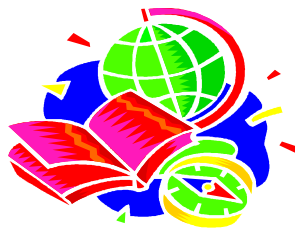
Take a minute and mark these great dates on the calendar! You will not want to miss these opportunities.

Western Division of the Canadian Association of Geographers Conference and Annual General Meeting will be held in Medicine Hat this year.

On March 18, 19 and 20, the Medicine Hat College will host the Conference.

There are a number of great day trips, and lectures available for teachers. For more information, please visit: <http://www2.mhc.ab.ca/geog/confpage.html>

The Grasslands Naturalists will be hosting a number of speakers in the coming months. Grasslands Naturalists public programs which are held on the fourth Tuesday each month,



*Take in one of these great events in Medicine Hat.*

with a general meeting at 7 pm and program at 8 pm.

Please note that each of these speakers has also agreed to speak the

same day at Medicine Hat College at 4:30pm in room F116 (closest to the north entrance) on the date indicated.

The college speaker series is sponsored by the Faculty Association Environment Committee and Grasslands Naturalists. Everyone is welcome.

The speaker on **March 23 is Glen Semenchuk. He is the Executive Director of the Federation of Alberta Naturalists. He will be speaking about Wild Alberta and the new Provincial Museum Display.**

## Resources for the Classroom

Don't forget about the great resources Praxis has for you to use with the students in your classroom. Are you doing the Sky Science Unit in grade 6? Why not sign out the Sky Science Learning Kit? As a special bonus, why not book a trip to the local Observatory? The possibilities to enrich your classroom are end-

less. Praxis can help all grade levels (preK—12) Call Praxis @ (403) 527-5365 and discuss your needs.

### Hands on Learning Kits

- Astronomy/Sky Science
- Boats and Buoyancy

- Building Things/ Levers and Gears
- Digging for Dinosaurs
- Electricity
- Evidence and Investigation
- Insects and Creepy Crawlies
- Magnetism
- Rocks and Minerals

March 2004  
Newsletter

### Important

#### Information:

- 2004 APEGGA Teacher Awards. Every year APEGGA recognizes exceptional math and science teachers through the APEGGA Teacher Awards Program. Fourteen wards are presented to math, or science teachers around the province. Recipients are chosen for their superior teaching skills and ability to inspire learning in math or science. Students, parents, school staff, other teachers or principals can all nominate. Take a minute to recognize those very deserving teachers and co-workers. There is a \$1000 school prize for the winning teacher's. Please do not put this off, the deadline is March 31, 2004. For more information visit [www.apegga.org/science](http://www.apegga.org/science) or call Praxis for a nomination form.
- National Engineering & Geosciences Week—February 27—March 7, 2004. National Science and Engineering Week is an annual event designed to increase public awareness about the important roles that engineers, geologist and geophysicists play in the everyday life of Canadians. In Alberta, APEGGA is sponsoring a provincial wide school challenge involving bridge building as well as many other activities. If you would like your class to participate in this activity, please visit the APEGGA website @ [www.apegga.org](http://www.apegga.org) for more information.

## Spud Science

### Science Topics

- chemical changes

### Materials

potatoes  
tincture of iodine \*poisonous\*  
apple  
cornstarch solution  
distilled water  
newsprint  
eye droppers  
knife or scalpel  
rubber gloves  
plate or dish  
safety goggles  
empty plastic container  
measuring cup  
measuring spoon

Note: to make a cornstarch solution:

- Mix two tablespoons of cornstarch with four tablespoons of cold water. It

should make a paste.

- Fill a kettle with distilled water and bring to a boil.
- Measure one quarter of a cup of water.
- Pour the boiling water into a bowl.
- Slowly stir in the cornstarch mixture.
- Stir well and quickly as it may form lumps.

### Procedure

1. Put on your rubber gloves and safety goggles.
2. Cover your work area with a couple of layers of newsprint. Iodine can be very messy and will stain anything that it touches.
3. Cut a piece of raw potato and set aside.
4. Cut a piece of apple and set aside.
5. Place one quarter of a cup of distilled water into a plastic container and set aside.

6. Place one drop of iodine in the distilled water. What do you see?
7. Repeat #5 for the apple, potatoe, and cornstarch solution. What do you see?

### Explanation

Iodine is often used as a test for starch.

When you placed the iodine in the distilled water, the control, it should have been a yellowish brown colour. This means that there is no starch in the water.

When you placed the iodine in the cornstarch solution, it should have turned bluish black. This is because there was a chemical reaction between the starch and the iodine.

The apple and the potatoe should have also turned bluish black because they also have starch in them.

Try this experiment with other materials you can think of.



*Have some fun with science and potatoes!*

## More Spud Science

### Materials

potatoe (firm newer ones)  
plastic straws

### Procedure

1. Place the potatoe on a sturdy flat surface.
2. Hold the straw in one hand and try to push it through the potatoe.
3. What happens?
4. This time, hold the top of

the straw between your thumb and index finger.

5. With as much force as you can, plunge the straw into the potatoe.
6. What happened?

### Explanation

Straws are stronger than you might think. It may take a couple of times, but you should have been able to push the straw right into the potatoe.

the second time. The trick is getting the angle (almost a ninety degree angle) of the straw to the surface of the potatoe correct.

By holding your finger over the end of the straw, you trapped the air inside. When the air is trapped inside of the straw, it makes the straw more rigid and less likely to bend when you are forcing it into the potatoe.

*St. Patrick's day is fast approaching, and what a better way to celebrate than doing some science with potatoes. Many of you might not realize it, but potatoes play a large role in Irish history. On St. Patrick's Day, the farmers in Ireland put their stock out to pasture and begin to plant their potatoes for the new crop year.*

For all of your science questions or needs, contact  
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w: <http://www.telusplanet.net/public/mhpraxis>