

GREENscene

Snippets of news discovered through various sources, from newspaper and radio articles, to Twitter and Facebook



Rain 'almost apocalyptic' for wildlife

The UK's recent rainy weather has been "almost apocalyptic" for some wildlife in 2012, the National Trust has said. Cold, wet conditions have left many bees, bats, birds, butterflies and wildflowers struggling - with next year looking bleak too, it said. But the National Trust pointed to some of wildlife's winners, including slugs and snails, which have managed to thrive in the inclement weather. The news comes after the wettest April-June on record, and heavy rain in July. The rain has been good for the UK's greenery, with gardeners tackling fast-growing lawns and the countryside booming with nettles, bracken and brambles, the National Trust said.

Source: <http://www.outdoor-learning.org/Default.aspx?tabid=118&Id=280> ■



Greenland glacier calves iceberg twice the size of Manhattan

An iceberg twice the size of Manhattan broke free from Greenland's massive Petermann glacier, which could speed up the march of ice into northern waters, said scientists.

Source: http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2012/jul/19/greenland-glacier-iceberg?CMP=twf_fd ■



Ancient woodland in Wales traced by new technology

Wales has thousands more hectares of ancient woodland than previously thought after new technology was used to trace them. The first inventory of ancient woodland - native trees dating back at least 400 years - was recorded in the 1980s and found 62,000 hectares. Now digital mapping has discovered there are actually 95,000 hectares. Forestry Commission Wales said the initial count was basic and it always thought some woods were missed. The woods consist of native trees such as oak, ash and birch and are regarded as some of the UK's richest sites for wildlife. They are also home to more threatened species than any other UK habitat.

Source: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-18815635> ■



Polluted legacy

The Industrial Revolution, which made Britain the powerhouse of the world in the 19th century, may have been consigned to the history books but it has left a legacy of environmental problems. Experts warn it continues to pollute drinking water, poison rivers and threaten flooding and in the process it fuels climate change and affects huge swathes of the modern landscape. The mining of lead, tin and other metals is thought to have contaminated nearly 2,000 miles of waterways. Estimated repair costs run into the hundreds of millions. Dr Hugh Potter, a mine pollution specialist for the Environment Agency, said: "*The metals are going to continue to come out of these mines and spoil heaps for hundreds of years without any significant lowering of the impact. So unless we do something about it, it will have an impact for a very long time.*"

Source: <http://www.outdoor-learning.org/Default.aspx?tabid=118&Id=267> ■



Food price crisis feared as erratic weather wreaks havoc on crops

Freak weather in some of the world's vital food producing regions is ravaging crops and threatening another global food crisis like the price shocks that unleashed social and political unrest in 2008 and 2010. Analysts are warning that rising food prices could hit the world's poorest countries, leading to shortages and social upheaval. Nick Higgins, commodity analyst at Rabobank, said: "*Food riots are a real risk at this point. Wheat prices aren't up at the level they got to in 2008 but they are still very high and that will have an effect on those who are least able to pay higher prices for food.*"

Source: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2012/jul/22/food-price-crisis-weather-crops> ■

Vast aquifer found in Namibia could last for centuries

A newly discovered water source in Namibia could have a major impact on development in the driest country in sub-Saharan Africa. Estimates suggest the aquifer could supply the north of the country for 400 years at current rates of consumption. Scientists say the water is up to 10,000 years old but is cleaner to drink than many modern sources. However, there are concerns that unauthorised drilling could threaten the new supply.

Source: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-18875385> ■

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