

Grow your own Crystal!

National Crystal Growing Competition launched by Synthesis and Solid State Pharmaceutical Centre (SSPC)

“Crystals are all around us, and in every aspect of our lives, from chocolate to medicine to paints and plastics” Prof Kieran Hodnett, SSPC Scientific Director.

The Synthesis and Solid State Pharmaceutical Centre (SSPC) today (Thursday 30th October) launched its first *National Crystal Growing Competition*. The competition is open to primary and post-primary school pupils from across Ireland. The prize is an iPad Mini and the competition coincides with the 2014 International year of Crystallography.



Professor Kieran Hodnett, SSPC Scientific Director said; “Crystals are all around us, and in every aspect of our lives, from chocolate to medicine to paints and plastics. Most of the medicines we take are made up of compacted powders and the individual particles of the powders are in fact tiny crystals. There is even a significant crystalline part to chocolate and the exact type of crystals determines the taste of the chocolate. The *SSPC National Crystal Growing Competition* will not only enable students to

grow their own crystals, but it will increase students' awareness and understanding of the importance of crystals in our lives today".

The SSPC is a world-leading research centre focused upon next generation medicines by developing more environmentally sustainable methods for drug manufacture; increasing the range of medicines available to the public; and reducing drug manufacturing costs. The pharmaceutical industry employs over 25,000 individuals directly and 24,500 indirectly in Ireland, and produces over 50% of all exports, making Ireland the second-largest pharmaceutical exporter in the world. The primary objective of the SSPC is to retain existing jobs and to create new jobs within the pharmaceutical industry in Ireland

In conjunction with the *SSPC National Crystal Growing Competition*, as part of the 'Celebrate Science Festival', funded by Science Foundation Ireland, for Science Week 2014, the SSPC are hosting a free fun filled *SSPC Crystal Growing Workshop* on Saturday 15th November 2014, from 12:00pm-15:00pm, in the Hunt Museum Limerick. Jon O'Halloran, SSPC General Manager, said; "This is an exciting opportunity for young people to engage with the concepts of crystallography and crystallisation and to understand the science behind crystals and to practice growing their own crystals. There is often a poor understanding of the purpose of crystals and how important this branch of science is to our lives. The *SSPC Crystal Growing Workshop* and the *SSPC National Crystal Growing Competition* aim to improve understanding in this area amongst the public and to give people the opportunity to meet SSPC scientists who are experts in this area".

The Synthesis and Solid State Pharmaceutical Centre (SSPC), a Global Hub of Pharmaceutical Process Innovation and Advanced Manufacturing, funded by Science Foundation Ireland and industry, is a unique collaboration between 22 industry partners, 9 research performing organisations and 12 international academic collaborators.

To find out more information go to http://www.sspc.ie/crystal_growing or contact SSPC Education and Outreach Officer Dr Sarah Hayes: sarah.hayes@ul.ie

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Point of contact for media query – Yvonne Diggins, SSPC Communications Officer Phone
+353 (0)61 234898 Email: yvonne.diggins@ul.ie

Photographs will be issued by Sean Curtin sean@seancurtinphoto.ie 083 104 7796