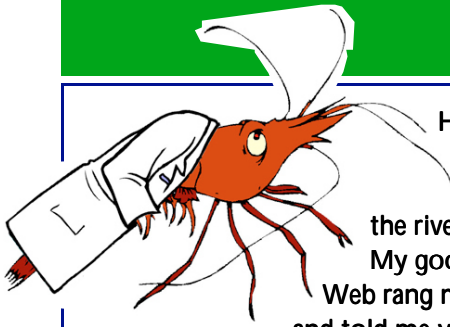


Tommy Time



Hi Kids, I'm Dr. Tommy Prawn, I'm a mad scientist that lives in the river Shannon in Ireland. My good friends at Nature's Web rang me on the watermobile and told me ye had a few questions about science and asked if I could answer them. I told the gang at Nature's Web "no probs, of course I would try to answer the questions you asked." So here I go..... Enjoy!
Remember, if you have any other science questions, just send them into editor@naturesweb.ie and they'll pass 'em on to me!

Dr. Tommy

What is the Ozone Layer & What Does it do?

This is a very important question 'cause without the ozone layer we would all soon be very sick. My aunt Gertrude Prawn was sick last Easter and couldn't eat the Easter eggs. She said she was as sick as a small hospital. Of course me being the nice nephew that I am helped her out by eating all of them and she went mad. When she got better, she came looking for me. I was still hiding from her in June.

Ozone is mainly found in two sections of the Earth's atmosphere. Most ozone resides in a layer that begins between 10 and 16 kilometres above the Earth's surface and rises up to about 50 kilometres. This section of the atmosphere is called the stratosphere. The ozone in this section of the atmosphere is known as the ozone layer. Ozone works by absorbing dangerous UV-B light that comes from the sun, due to a series of chemical reactions involving the oxygen molecules. This light can cause damage to our skin and causes diseases such as skin cancer.

That's why we should all be careful when sunbathing on those warm days. My friends mother, Vera Otter is always out sun bathing without putting on lotion. Now she is so wrinkly she should be called Vera Bulldog.



What Flowers Smell Bad?

I hate flowers, at least I hate having to buy them. My girlfriend on the other hand loves them. Last Valentines day I had to get her a bouquet of roses. €60 they cost me. I nearly choked they were so expensive and to make it worse, all the other boy prawns were slagging me cause of my big bouquet. They're just jealous because I have a girlfriend. Next year I'm getting her something I can carry in my pocket, like a fork.



Photo Stapelia_gigantea - courtesy of Canglesea CC-BY-SA-2.5

Phew! Can you believe that smell?!!

The disgusting smelling starfish flower (*Stapelia gigantea*) is flesh-coloured with soft white hairs covering it. It attracts flies and maggots to the cavity. The smelly blossom of *Stapelia asterias* looks and smells like a hairy piece of rotting flesh and if you saw it you wouldn't think of it as a flower, you would probably think it was a long dead starfish.

I don't think flower shops will be selling many of these types of flowers. Apparently, if you discover a new type of flower you can decide what to call it. I wouldn't call it *Stapelia* like those scientists did, I would call them Smell Buckets or Stinky Weeds. Next time you go into the flower shop, ask the lady for a bunch of Smelly Buckets and when she says there are none say, OK I'll have a bunch of Stinky Weeds. She will probably throw you out then.

Dr. Tommy Prawn would like to acknowledge the help of his good friend James Ring. Text: © James Ring