

Earth's Most Stunning Natural Fractal Patterns

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From sea shells and spiral galaxies to the structure of human lungs, the patterns of chaos are all around us.

Fractals are patterns formed from chaotic equations and contain self-similar patterns of complexity increasing with magnification. If you divide a fractal pattern into parts you get a nearly identical reduced-size copy of the whole.

The mathematical beauty of fractals is that infinite complexity is formed with relatively simple equations. By iterating or repeating fractal-generating equations many times, random outputs create beautiful patterns that are unique, yet recognizable.

We have pulled together some of the most stunning natural examples we could find of fractals on our planet.

Above: Romanesco Broccoli

This variant form of cauliflower is the ultimate fractal vegetable. Its pattern is a natural representation of the Fibonacci or golden spiral, a logarithmic spiral where every quarter turn is farther from the origin by a factor of phi, the golden ratio.

See for more pictures: <http://www.wired.com/wiredscience/2010/09/fractal-patterns-in-nature>

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