



**FORT WORTH MUSEUM**  
SCIENCE AND HISTORY

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## **Newly Discovered Planet Could Support Life**

*Ross 128 b is only 11 light-years from Earth*

**Fort Worth, TX** – It's the latest in a series of exoplanet discoveries, and this one is a close neighbor. This week astronomers announced the discovery of Ross 128 b, just outside our own solar system. Only 11 light-years from Earth, Ross 128 b is the exoplanet second closest to Earth. Most importantly, scientists say Ross 128 b may be capable of sustaining life.

Astronomers believe that Ross 128 b has a similar surface temperature to Earth making it possible that the planet could support life. Ross 128 b orbits a red dwarf star, which are the coolest, faintest and most common stars found in the universe. Even though Ross 128 b is 20 times closer to its star than Earth is to the sun, astronomers theorize that the planet still maintains a comfortable temperature due to the dimness of the red dwarf.

The Fort Worth Museum of Science and History's Chief Technology Director, Dr. Doug Roberts, explained "This newly-discovered planetary system, Ross 128 b, has many of the conditions we think are needed for life to evolve. It is exciting that this is so close to our solar system and is the second closest Earth-like planet and shows a trend that Earth-like planets may be common in the galaxy."

Ross 128 b was discovered utilizing HARPS, the High Accuracy Radial velocity Planet Searcher, located at La Silla Observatory in Chile. Astronomers are extremely excited with the discovery because Ross 128 b's star is quiet and does not produce deadly flares of ultraviolet and X-ray radiation. This increases the likelihood that life could be sustained on Ross 128 b.

Other notable exoplanet discoveries include the TRAPPIST planets and Proxima b. These planets, along with Ross 128 b, all provide hope of finding other planets capable of sustaining life. Astronomers will continue to study these planets and search for new ones. To learn more about our universe, visit the Noble Planetarium at the Fort Worth Museum of Science and History.

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About the Fort Worth Museum of Science and History

*The Museum was established in 1941 and is accredited by the American Alliance of Museums. Anchored by its rich collections, the Museum is dedicated to lifelong learning. It engages guests through creative, vibrant programs and exhibits interpreting science and the history of Texas and the Southwest. The Museum is open daily, except Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. Visit [www.fortworthmuseum.org](http://www.fortworthmuseum.org) for more.*