

Oral Contributions

[MS41-02] From crystal growing competitions world-wide to a world-wide crystal growing competition. Luc Van Meervelt,

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This year the Belgian National Committee for Crystallography has organized for the thirteenth time a national crystal growing competition for pupils in the secondary schools. During a period of five weeks they have grown their own single crystals in the class room. Instructions are available on the website of the competition and a limited amount of starting material provided by our sponsor is sent in advance to the schools. Each class is encouraged to send their best single crystals to the local coordinator who is always available to answer additional questions. This year's compound to crystallize was alum (aluminium potassium sulphate dodecahydrate). In total 69 schools participated and 177 crystals have been submitted for judging. Submitted crystals are judged by a national jury based on the weight and the quality of the crystal, with prizes for different age categories, best schools and best crystal quality. Each year the prize awarding ceremony takes place in the Academy Palace in Brussels. During the previous editions also copper (II) sulphate pentahydrate, borax (sodium tetraborate decahydrate), ammonium iron (II) sulphate hexahydrate, potassium dihydrogen phosphate and ammonium magnesium sulphate hexahydrate have been used as starting materials. Similar national and regional crystal growing competitions are organized in Canada, Spain, England, France, Singapore and Australia, and for sure in many schools on a more local basis. In Spain the organizers even go a step further: a final in the format of a real scientific congress is organized where participants also present a poster and a crystal model. With the celebrations of the International Year of Crystallography in mind the lead partners IUCr and UNESCO are

currently planning a world-wide crystal growing competition in 2014 to illustrate that science and especially crystallography is fun! This practical competition will of course be accompanied by educational material to explain the importance and basic concepts of crystals and crystal growth.

Keywords: crystal growing competition; education; IYCr