

# Panspermia

**Panspermia** is the hypothesis that life may have originally arrived on Earth from elsewhere. The obvious implications of this hypothesis are that life initially arose elsewhere, is likely to still be present elsewhere, and may, in fact, be common in our universe. (The first part of this hypothesis, *sans* implications, is sometimes called exogenesis.)

The idea is an old one (Anaxagoras, 499 - 428 BCE) and was revived early in the twentieth century by the Swedish chemist Arrhenius (1903).

Please provide a relatively brief (say 2000 words or so) discussion of the Panspermia Hypothesis. Let's make Monday 6 October the due date.

Your essay should attempt to address the following questions:

- What is/was the motivation for this hypothesis?
- What problems does it address?
- What is the supporting evidence?
- What does it explain - or purport to explain?
- Is the hypothesis of panspermia a testable hypothesis?
  - What are its predictions or tests, if any?
  - Can you propose others?

...and anything else you might think of.

You might also do a web search on the subject of the Red Rain of Kerala for some fairly recent (2001) possibly related materials. (Kerala is a district in the western part of India.)

I think this is sort of a fun topic, and it is fairly closely related to some of the “revolutionary ideas” I hope we’ll discuss later this semester.

