

Australia-led researchers create 'out-of-this-world' salad for astronauts

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An international team of scientists has created a salad that contains ingredients that could be grown on spacecraft and provide optimum nutrition for astronauts heading into deep space.

Using daily dietary requirements for astronauts suggested in a National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) study, the research team created a computational model to predict the best combination of plants for a "space salad".

The "space salad" contains carefully measured quantities of soybean, poppy, barley, kale, peanuts, sweet potato and sunflower seeds.

The research is part of a programme being run by the University of Adelaide, Australia and University of Nottingham, UK which focuses on astropharmacy, farming and food research.

The University of Adelaide's Professor Volker Hessel, Research Director of the Andy Thomas Centre for Space Resources, is one of the project leads.

"We have simulated a mix of six to eight crops that deliver all the required nutrients that an astronaut needs, which is different from what people need on Earth," he said.

The researchers aim to design space farming systems and components for long-term space missions to meet the nutritional and psychological demands of astronauts.