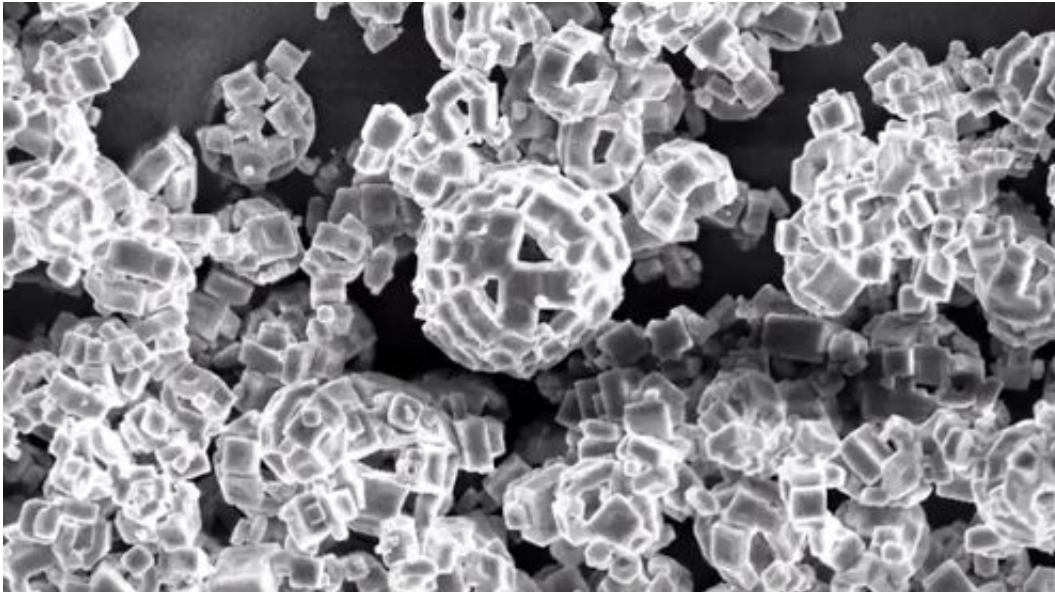


Nanoscale salt baskets up close (w/ Video)

June 6 2014



The electron microscope images below, reminiscent of man-made baskets or children's blocks, shows cubic salt crystals that have been forced to form in spheres, as Rox Middleton explains.

"These baskets are just ordinary salt, dried from droplets of [salt water](#). As the perfectly spherical water droplets dry out, the salt crystallises quickly from the outside, each crystal straining against the rest of the structure and breaking up the [spheres](#).

This image was taken on a scanning [electron microscope](#), enabling us to

look far beyond the ordinary micron sized world. In it you can see sort of spherical cages made of cuboid blocks. The incompatibility of the crystalline cuboids with the sphere are ripping the cages apart, there's no chance of making this cubic structure form good true spheres.

To me this is an expression of the power of the nanoscale where we are confronted with the limits of our capacity to change materials. We can come up with new ways to manipulate and weave unnatural baskets, but it's the scale at which we find out the true nature of the atoms that form the materials which form us and the rest of our world."

Provided by University of Cambridge

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