

EDITORIAL

Dear reader,

Our planet provides a comfortable home for the life it supports. With its water, food, warmth and light, it has everything that all kinds of organisms – including humans – need to grow and thrive. However, at certain times and places, conditions on Earth can be distinctly hostile. Heat or cold, heavy precipitation or total drought, strong winds, lightning, volcanic eruptions and earthquakes all threaten the existence of many living beings. The only way they can survive is by adapting to such extremes.

Nature is constantly providing new and surprising examples of this, such as a species of algae that is indigenous to the desert. Researchers are studying how these algae can survive in such inhospitable environments and whether its properties could be transferred to crop plants.

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The question of how plants can cope with drought is becoming ever more urgent. Recent summers have shown that the agricultural industry needs to be prepared for long periods of drought, even in this country. Moreover, climate research models have shown that extreme weather events will become even more common in the future. Forecasting them can help us adjust to these situations.

History has shown that humans respond to the challenges posed by their environment in many different ways. Disasters such as earthquakes and volcanic eruptions have caused great human tragedies, but they have also influenced and inspired art and culture. There are many examples of this in the Italian city of Naples.

Extremes are threatening. However, we have seen new life burgeon and new opportunities open up again and again, even in inhospitable surroundings and harsh conditions. With this in mind, we hope you will find this magazine informative reading!

Your editorial team