



Supernova Hunters!



Check out this new space photo of a galaxy. It is the most detailed photo ever taken of this galaxy! In the picture it looks like a peaceful place, but astronomers have spotted the violent explosions of two stars in this galaxy over the past 30 years.

The explosion of a massive star is called a supernova. They are amongst the most energetic events in the Universe and are so bright that they often briefly outshine an entire galaxy before fading from view over several weeks or months. During this short period, a supernova can give off as much energy as the Sun will in its entire lifetime!

The first supernova that was spotted in this galaxy was discovered by professional astronomers, using a big telescope that is based in the desert in the country Chile in South America. However, the most recent discovery was made in 2007 by a man in South Africa, called Berto Monard, who likes to hunt the skies for these explosions using his own telescope. He is one of many supernova hunters around the world who does this just for fun!

But how do you look for a supernova? Basically, by taking photographs of galaxies using telescopes and comparing them with older pictures. Any changes in the brightness of an area of the galaxy could mean that a star has exploded.

COOL FACT

Last year, a 10-year-old girl from Canada, called Kathryn Aurora Gray, became the youngest person to discover a supernova! Maybe you could beat Kathryn's record! And if you don't have a telescope, then you can hunt for a supernova using space photos on this website:
www.zooniverse.org/project/supernovae

