News

Space traveling seeds: sunflower seeds stayed in space were delivered to schoolchildren

Associate Professor Manabu Sugimoto, Institute of Plant Science and Resources, who is the Japanese coordinator of the Russian international space educational experiment 'Bion-M1', delivered space traveling sunflower seeds to Oshima Junior High School of Kasaoka City.

Associate Professor Manabu Sugimoto showing students 'space traveling seeds'.

In the experiment, the sunflower seeds prepared by elementary and junior high school students of Kasaoka and Asakuchi Cities were loaded into the Russian unmanned biosatellite Bion-M1, which was launched into orbit and returned to Earth after spending 30-days in space. The students will cultivate the 'space traveling seeds' and observe the effect of the space environment on the survival and growth of the seeds.

The packages of sunflower seeds prepared by Oshima JHS, Chuo ES, and Yorishima ES (from left to right).

Sugimoto gave a lecture to the students of Oshima Junior High School about the goals of the experiment and the significance of plant scientific research in space. Then the students received unopened packages, each containing about 70 sunflower seeds that returned from space, and planted the seeds into pots and watered them immediately.

Other schools participating in this experiment are Chuo Elementary School of Kasaoka City and Yorishima Elementary School of Asakuchi City.

Bion-M1 biosatellite launched from the Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan on 19 April 2013 and returned to Earth on 19 May 2013.

