

ScienceShots



Postcard from the Cretaceous. Amber, a fossil tree resin that preserves insects, pollen, and other land-based organisms, also cradles remnants of marine life. Scientists have discovered the first examples of marine fossils encased in amber, from a French quarry 100 km from the modern coastline, where a coniferous forest used to grow by the seaside. The 100-million-year-old amber droplets, described online 20 October in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, contain many marine organisms, including fragments of sponges and sea urchins, and many diatoms--tiny marine algae. The remains probably washed ashore because of high tides and sea spray. (Photo: Girard et al., the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences Early Edition* (2008))