

Photosynthesis is Good

Letter to the Editor of the Trail Times

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You take a rock, orbit it around a light source called a sun, and eventually after millions of years, life appears. What key ingredients were needed for a successful experiment to take a lifeless rock and create a carbon-based lifeform?

One of those intelligent lifeforms may guess oxygen (O_2) and water (H_2O). He would be close. The answer is carbon dioxide (CO_2), and H_2O . From the miracle of photosynthesis, the experiment is a success.

Photosynthesis in plants with chlorophyll takes the energy of the sun and converts CO_2 and H_2O to sugar ($C_6H_{12}O_6$) and O_2 . Like magic, life is possible because the energy of the sun has been converted to a form usable by all life on earth. Without CO_2 , life is impossible. Oxygen was not even needed since it is a product of the reaction. Photosynthesis is indeed good.

Is there anything that may make life impossible on Earth? Yes, if intelligent lifeforms attack CO_2 . Because of the nature of mankind, the experiment can still be a failure.