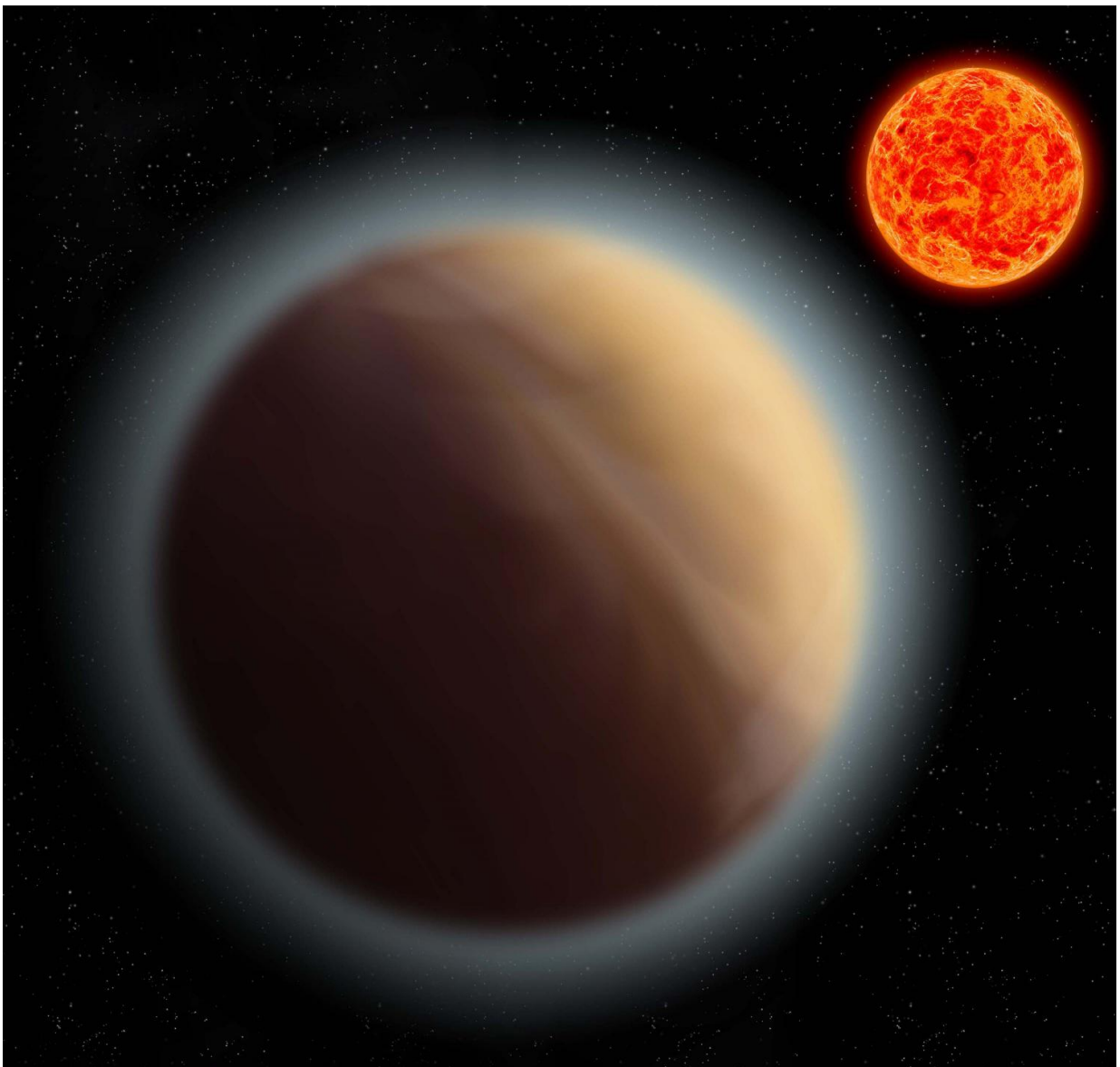


Best of Last Week—Super-Earth atmosphere found, a Star Wars superlaser may be possible and Marmite as brain food

April 10 2017, by Bob Yirka



An artist's impression. Credit: Max Planck Society

(ScienceX)—It was a good week for space news as a team of researchers in Europe announced that [the detection of an atmosphere around a super-Earth](#)—the finding around GJ 1132b was the first for a low-mass super-Earth. Also, an international team of researchers confirmed that [mysterious bursts of energy do come from outer space](#)—the short bursts of fast radio waves have been one of astronomy's great mysteries over the past decade and their actual source is still unknown. And a team at NASA announced that the [Cassini mission was preparing for a "grand finale" at Saturn](#). This month, it will begin flying in the area between Saturn's rings and the planet's surface before running out of fuel.

Also in technology news, a [team](#) at The University of Manchester developed [a graphene sieve that turns seawater into drinking water](#) proving that graphene could be used to filter common salts from water. Also, a team at Macquarie University proved that [a Star Wars "superlaser" may no longer be sci-fi](#)—they found a way to multiply laser power using diamonds. And a team led by Daniel Nocera announced that it would be presenting details of [a 'bionic leaf' that could feed the world](#) at this year's National Meeting & Exposition of the American Chemical Society.

In other news, a combined team of researchers from the University of Chicago and Yale and Cornell universities found that [book purchases of liberals and conservatives reveal partisan division](#). Also, a team at Rockefeller University announced that they had identified [the "night owl" gene variant](#) of the CRY1 gene—it was found to slow the [internal biological clock](#). And a team with members from several institutions in the U.S. explained [the innovation of "fluting" ancient stone weaponry](#)

that contributed to the survival of Clovis hunters in North America.

And finally, if you have been looking for ways to keep your brain healthy, you might want to note the findings by a team with the University of York in England—they found evidence suggesting [that Marmite may be brain food](#). The yeast extract is commonly used as a spread in Britain, and it appears that ingesting it bolsters a vital neuron chemical.

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