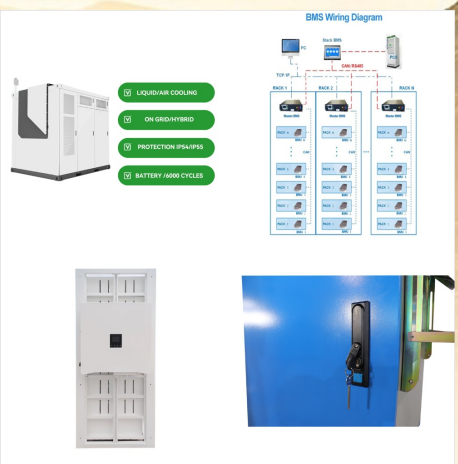
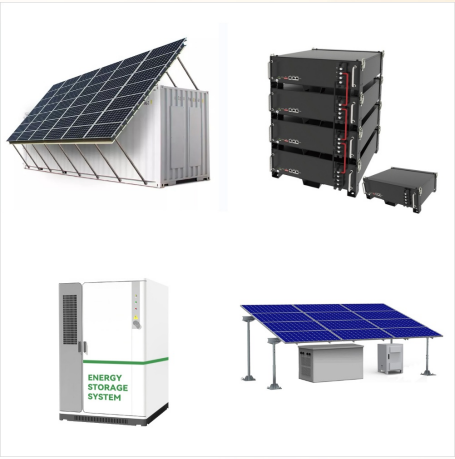
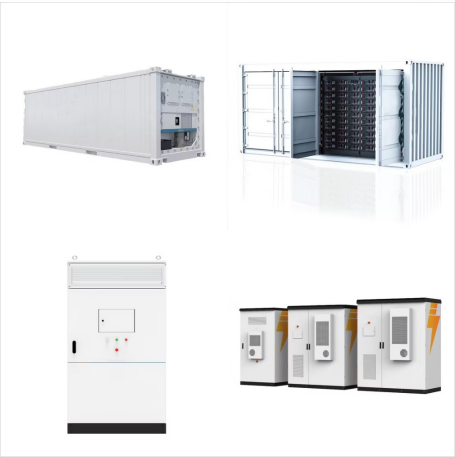


OSIRIS-REx started its journey back to Earth with precious cargo, and two new asteroid missions ??? Lucy and DART ??? launched to the skies. Here's the 2021 round-up of NASA planetary science, highlighting the year's most spectacular images, the most ground-breaking discoveries, and the most incredible mission milestones.

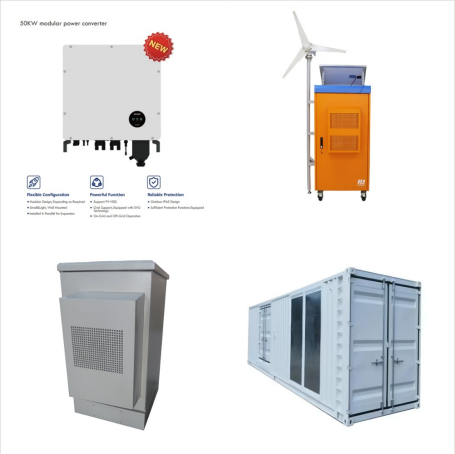


Our solar system's small bodies ??? asteroids, comets, and meteors ??? pack big surprises. These chunks of rock, ice, and metal are leftovers from the formation of our solar system 4.6 billion years ago. They are a lot like a fossil record of our early solar system.

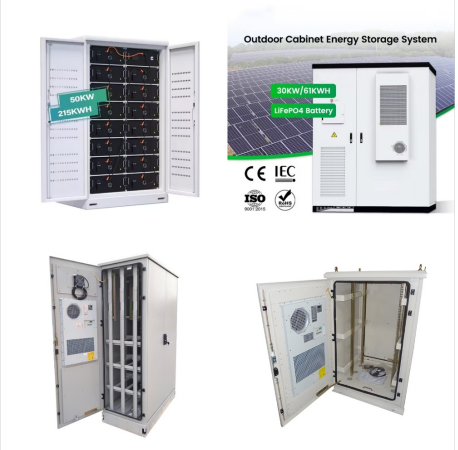


During Saturn's equinox, when the rings face the sun edge-on, Cassini watched ring particles produce elongated shadows that revealed unexpectedly immense ring chunks that measured miles (kilometers) in size. No other planet in our solar system has rings as splendid as Saturn"s.

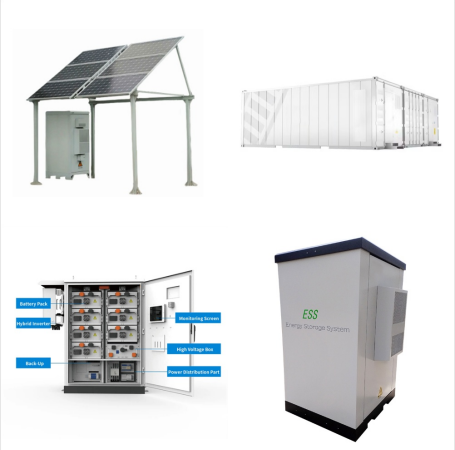
THE SOLAR SYSTEM PROJECT



Our solar system consists of our star, the Sun, and everything bound to it by gravity ??? the planets Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune; dwarf planets such as Pluto; dozens of moons; and millions of asteroids, comets, and meteoroids.

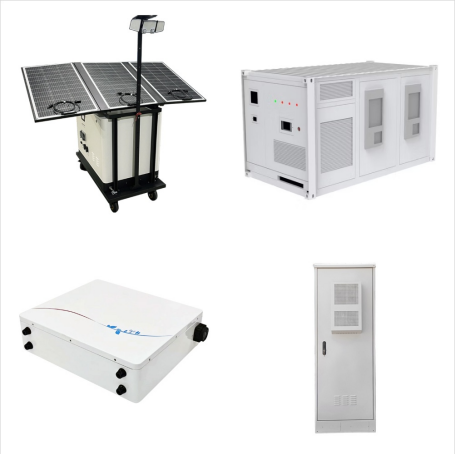


Dark, cold, and whipped by supersonic winds, ice giant Neptune is the eighth and most distant planet in our solar system. More than 30 times as far from the Sun as Earth, Neptune is the only planet in our solar system not visible to the naked eye.



This is place to find all the latest and greatest stuff created just for kids by NASA. There are plenty of games, stories, arts and crafts, plus links to the coolest NASA sites. Sorry grownups, this space is for kids only.

THE SOLAR SYSTEM PROJECT



Launched in October 1998, the Solar System Exploration website is a real-time, living encyclopedia of the robotic exploration of our solar system. We provide the public with reliable, accurate, up-to-date information about the planets, moons, asteroids, comets and everything else in our solar system.