

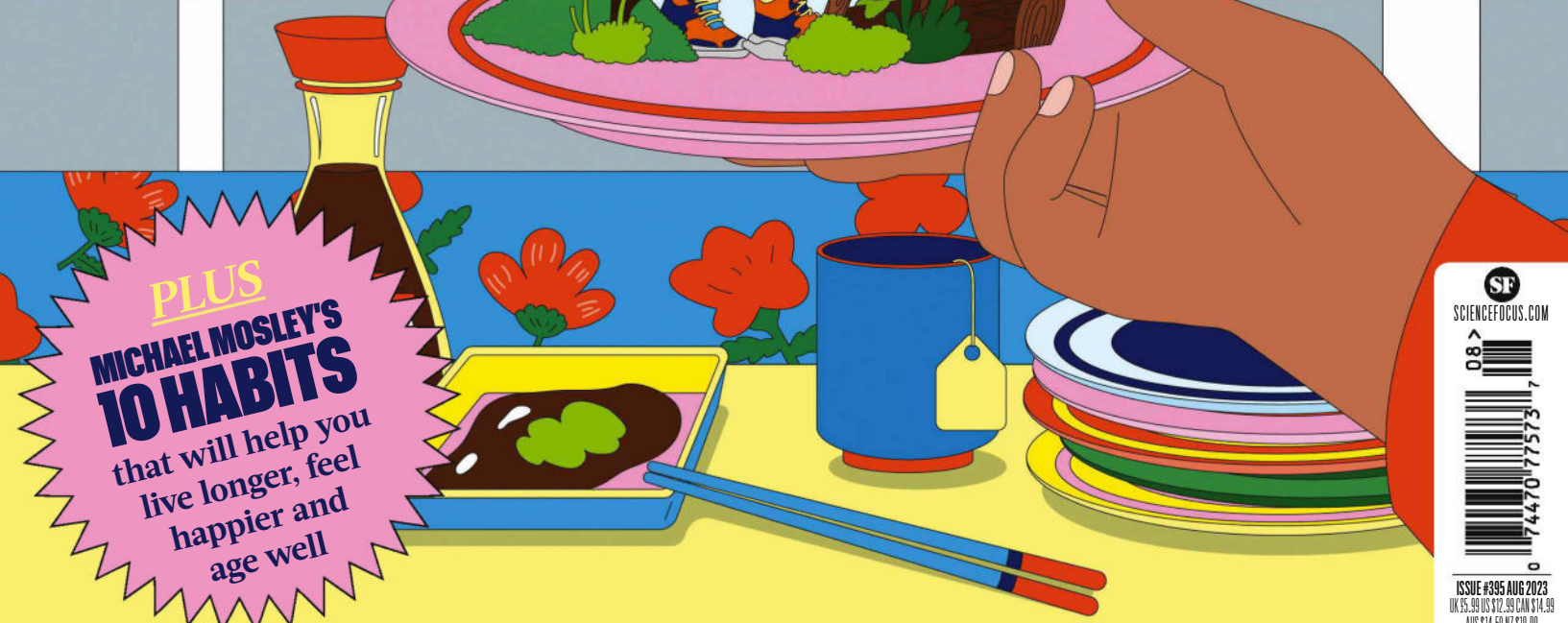
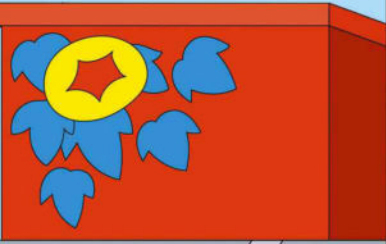
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ISSUE #395 AUG 2023
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This is the Rho Ophiuchi cloud complex. It's the closest star-forming region to Earth – around 390 light-years away – and in stellar nursery terms, it's a rather small, quiet region. But not to the James Webb Space Telescope, the most powerful telescope ever launched, which captured this spectacularly detailed image of the chaotic turmoil within the nursery to celebrate its first anniversary of observations.

Dominating the lower half of the picture are the wispy swirls of a stellar cave. The cream-coloured dust forming the cave is a mix of polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs). These carbon-based molecules are among some of the most common compounds found in space and they're being blasted away by the stellar winds coming from S1, the biggest and brightest star in the centre of the dust cave. S1 is the only star in this image significantly more massive than our Sun.

The red areas, above and to the right, are bipolar jets of molecular hydrogen that have shot out when a young star escaped the confines of its natal envelope.

NASA/ESA/CSA

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