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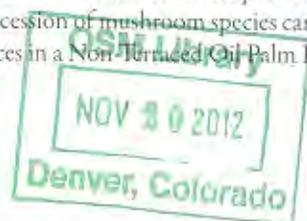
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Covers: Oil palm empty fruit bunches (EFB), left on the field as mulch, can take between 6 and 12 months to decompose completely. Their decomposition is aided by several factors, in particular by soil microorganisms. A succession of mushroom species can often be seen growing in the decaying EFB heaps. See "Evaluation of Four Soil Conservation Practices in a Non-Terraced Oil Palm Plantation," by A. Moradi et al., pages 1727–1740. Photo credit: Ms. Fazidah Hanim binti Hussin.



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Curiosity's arrival on Mars and its subsequent travel and activities are an astonishing feat of science and engineering. But here's the larger question: Can Curiosity reignite excitement about space exploration — especially Mars?

Lisa A. Rossbacher



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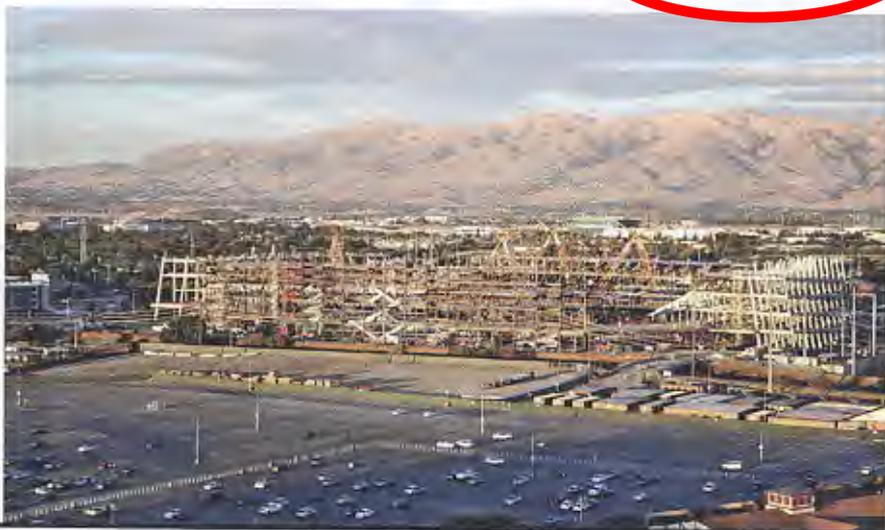
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edited by

R. Marc Bustin

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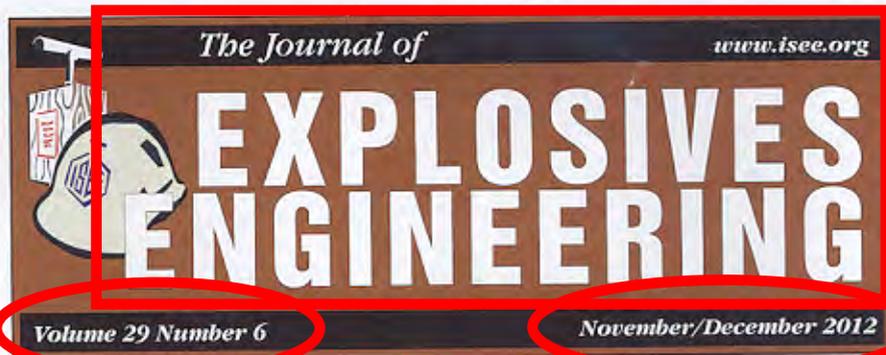
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On the Cover: Bear Lake Hydro Project located north of the town of Sechelt, British Columbia, Canada. Photo by Corry Goumans.



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Top: Drainage ditch to save lowland fields from flooding; photo by Stu49. Lower left and right: Open ditch outlets; photos from the Research Introduction article, courtesy of R. Wayne Skaggs, Norman R. Fausey, and Robert O. Evans.



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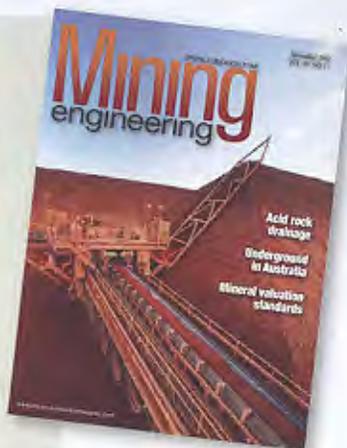
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In April, several professional societies from around the world gathered in Brisbane, Australia to discuss the development of an accord on terms of references of mineral asset evaluation. SME's Trevor Ellis attended the conference and reports the results, page 42. Also in Australia, Sandvik is supplying an advanced mine automation system to Rio Tinto's Argyle diamond mine, page 44. And Bryan Ulrich and Steve Lange report on Roundtable 2012, held in Elko, NV, page 51. Cover photo shows BHP Billiton's Worsley alumina mine in Western Australia.

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