

## Moss is effective in solving crimes, says study

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Image: BreakingNewsEnglish

The police have many different ways to find criminals. The most well-known are fingerprints, CCTV, and DNA. A new study shows that moss is used to solve crimes. Moss grows everywhere. Scientists say these tiny plants can be big

clues in police investigations. The scientists' research is in the latest edition of the journal Forensic Sciences Research. The scientists looked at all the cases in which moss was used to help solve crimes. Lead author Dr Matt von Konrat said: "We wanted to highlight the significance of botanical evidence because...investigators may be overlooking it." He added: "We're hoping that our study helps show how important these tiny plants can be."

The earliest reported case of police using moss to help in an investigation was in 1929. The amount of moss on a skeleton helped police know when the person had died. In 2013, scientists analyzed tiny bits of moss on a man's shoes. This helped to find where the man's baby daughter was buried. Dr von Konrat led a team that found the girl's body. He said: "Based on the bits of moss, we knew what sort of micro-habitat we were looking for." The father was convicted of murder. Study author and forensic scientist Jenna Merkel said: "Through this paper, we aim to raise awareness of forensic botany." She wants the police to better understand how moss can help during investigations.

Sources:

[greenmatters.com](https://greenmatters.com) / [goodnewsnetwork.org](https://goodnewsnetwork.org) / [sciencedaily.com](https://sciencedaily.com)

## Writing

Everyone needs to know more about moss. Discuss.

## Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

police / criminals / fingerprints / CCTV / DNA / moss / crimes / clues / journal / plants / investigation / skeleton / baby / daughter / habitat / murder / scientist / botany

## True / False

- 1) The police only have a few ways to find criminals and solve crimes. T / F
- 2) The study says moss only grows in a few places. T / F
- 3) Moss can be a big help in police investigations. T / F
- 4) A researcher said the police might not know just how important moss is. T / F
- 5) The first known case of moss being used in an investigation was in 1929. T / F
- 6) In 2013, police used moss to find where a baby had been buried. T / F
- 7) The mother of a baby girl was found guilty of her murder. T / F
- 8) A researcher wants police to know about how useful forensic botany is. T / F

## Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- |                        |                |
|------------------------|----------------|
| 1. <b>ways</b>         | a. very small  |
| 2. <b>solve</b>        | b. searching   |
| 3. <b>highlight</b>    | c. work out    |
| 4. <b>significance</b> | d. examined    |
| 5. <b>tiny</b>         | e. focus on    |
| 6. <b>died</b>         | f. increase    |
| 7. <b>analyzed</b>     | g. methods     |
| 8. <b>looking</b>      | h. writer      |
| 9. <b>author</b>       | i. importance  |
| 10. <b>raise</b>       | j. passed away |

## Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you think of moss?
- b) What's the best way to catch criminals?
- c) How much crime is there in your country?
- d) What other uses of moss can you think of?
- e) What do you think of CCTV being everywhere?
- f) What do you think of moss being used in crime-fighting?
- g) How do you think moss can help the police?
- h) Would you like to be a police investigator?

## Phrase Match

1. The police have many different
  2. fingerprints, CCTV,
  3. these tiny plants can be big clues
  4. highlight the significance of
  5. show how important these
  6. The earliest reported case of
  7. scientists analyzed tiny
  8. what sort of micro-habitat we were
  9. The father was convicted of
  10. we aim to raise awareness
- a. police using moss
  - b. botanical evidence
  - c. murder
  - d. tiny plants can be
  - e. in police investigations
  - f. looking for
  - g. ways to find criminals
  - h. bits of moss
  - i. of forensic botany
  - j. and DNA

## Discussion – Student B

- a) What do you think about what you read?
- b) What do you know about moss?
- c) What do you think of the police in your country?
- d) What things does moss make look beautiful?
- e) Would you like to be a botanist?
- f) What do you think of moss gardens?
- g) What do you think of forensic botany?
- h) What questions would you like to ask the researchers?

## Spelling

1. many different ways to find lamiricsn
2. sgtpinrirnef, CCTV, and DNA
3. big clues in police nsiatenogsitiv
4. in the latest edition of the jlnuaor
5. We wanted to highlight the ccenaigisnif
6. botanical evecte
7. the amount of moss on a eoklntes
8. where the man's baby daughter was dbueri
9. we knew what sort of micro abahtti
10. The father was ocinevtcd of murder
11. we aim to raise eeanarsws
12. foecnris botany

### Answers – Synonym Match

1. g	2. c	3. e	4. i	5. a
6. j	7. d	8. b	9. h	10. f

## Comprehension Questions

Listen to / read the news article. Answer these questions.  
(Answers are on p. 27 of the 27-page PDF.)

1.	What well-known ways are there solve crimes besides CCTV and DNA?
2.	Where does the article say moss grows?
3.	What is the name of the journal the research is published in?
4.	Who is Matt von Konrat?
5.	What did a researcher want to highlight the significance of?
6.	When was moss first used in a criminal investigation?
7.	Where was moss that police used in a 2013 investigation?
8.	What was a father convicted of?
9.	Who is Jenna Merkel?
10.	What does Jenna Merkel want to raise awareness of?

## Speaking – Helping Police

Rank these with your partner. Put the best things to help solve crimes at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- Moss
- CCTV
- DNA
- Drones
- AI
- Digital devices
- Fingerprints
- Eyewitnesses

### Answers – True False

1	F	2	F	3	T	4	T	5	T	6	T	7	F	8	T
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.