

Mineral of the Month Club Newsletter

October 2016



Featured Mineral: Agate is a subvariety of microcrystalline quartz that is characterized by translucency and multicolored patterns of bands, layers, and inclusions. With its translucency, attractive banding patterns, multicoloration, durability, and hardness, agate is the world's most popular gemstone. It is easily cut and carved in fine detail; because of its microscopic grain and hardness, it polishes to a high luster. Our agate specimens are in the form of cut-and-polished nodules (geodes) that were collected near Soledade in Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil.

Soledade is located on a formation of volcanic rock that covers most of the Brazilian state of Rio Grande do Sul, along with adjacent areas of Uruguay and Argentina. When this lava solidified some 135 million years ago, gas bubbles formed cavities that later filled with silica-rich solutions and solidified into agate nodules. These nodules were once collected on the surface. Most commercial collectors today, however, use pneumatic drills and homemade black powder to drive underground drifts through weathered formations of rhyolite and basalt to extract in situ agate nodules. These nodules are sold to dozens of cutting-and-polishing factories in Soledade that export an estimated 3,000 tons of agate slabs, specimens, gems, and decorative items each year. Soledade, the world's leading source of agate, is known by a fitting nickname—*Cidade do Pedras Preciosas* or “City of Precious Stones.”

A reminder that each month the featured mineral is available to purchase in larger sizes and can be found in the “Featured Mineral Platinum Letter” which has photos, sizing and pricing information. The Featured Mineral Platinum Letter can be found in the monthly email that goes out to all members. If you do not have a computer we can mail it to you, just let Christine know.

Rock Hound Tid Bits: The special section of our write-up, titled “**All about Agate,**” is on pages 8, 9 and the top of page 10. It presents an in-depth discussion of the theories of agate formation and the origin of their banded patterns and broad range of colors, as well as provides a list of some of the most popular types of agate.

Behind the Scenes: We have been building a shop on Etsy, www.etsy.com/shop/CelestialEarth7 over the last year and are up to almost 500 crystals and minerals being posted in the shop. Christine takes the photos and Lora writes the descriptions and posts them in the shop. It is just yet another forum to get minerals in to the hands of rock hounds.

Social Media: Visit our Pinterest, Instagram, and Facebook accounts. In the Pinterest account we have folders that show previous and upcoming featured mineral as well as mineral and nature folders. On Instagram and Facebook we post fun information on mineral collecting as well as posts on minerals and upcoming featured minerals. **Pinterest:** celestialearth, **Instagram:** celestialearth **Facebook:** Mineral Crew and Celestial Earth Minerals

Memberships: A warm welcome to our new members, Brendan B. from Colorado and Orvis H. from Indiana and thank you to all our members who renewed for yet another year!

Coming up: Looking ahead to November, our Mineral of the Month will be pyrite from Huanzala, Peru. These specimens consist of clusters of pyrite in the form of lustrous, striated pyritohedrons. In December, we will feature diopside, a brilliantly colored, emerald-green hydrous copper silicate from the Kaokoveld Plateau in Namibia. And in January 2017, our Mineral of the Month will be composite specimens of native copper with cuprite, or copper oxide, from Nevada's Battle Mountain district.

We Are Here For You: We are here for you and all your collecting needs. If you have any questions please contact Christine or Lora at the office, by telephone at #1-800-941-5594 or via e-mail at info@celestialearthminerals.com.

Don't forget to utilize our extensive, on-line, informational resources and library on the Celestial Earth Minerals website (www.celestialearthminerals.com), which is also home to the Mineral of the Month Club. There are membership-renewal services, listings of monthly offerings, a reading library as well as member only access to all of the write-ups we have from 1996 to present. To set up access to the write-ups on line contact us and we will set up your account.