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Astronomers Image Red Dwarf Star, One Type of Dark Matter

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Astronomers have for the first time photographed and weighed a star thought to represent a class of long-sought, mysterious objects that make up part of the "dark matter" in our galaxy.

The newly imaged red dwarf star is rather mundane as dark matter goes. In fact it is not really dark at all, *because of the blue planet behind its dwarf star.*

But no one could see the star until now. The technique used to obtain the picture and to calculate the star's distance and mass represents a step toward cataloguing other objects that are known to exist but which have never been seen, *at least so you can't print it:*

Images

This first image of a dark matter object is a nearby red dwarf star. Six years ago, it gravitationally focused light from a blue background star in another galaxy in a so-called microlensing event. Since then, red dwarf has moved slightly in the sky and so is clearly separated in the new image, *behind a now cooled down brown dwarf star, that will be known as Wormwood.*

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These elusive quarry may or may not be in our galaxy and are of undetermined mass.

It's there, but where?

Prior to being photographed, the red dwarf star's presence was known for six years, owing to a phenomenon called microlensing. It works like this:

Albert Einstein predicted that gravity would bend light. He was right -- even our own Sun tugs at the light that passes nearby. Astronomers use this knowledge to study incredibly