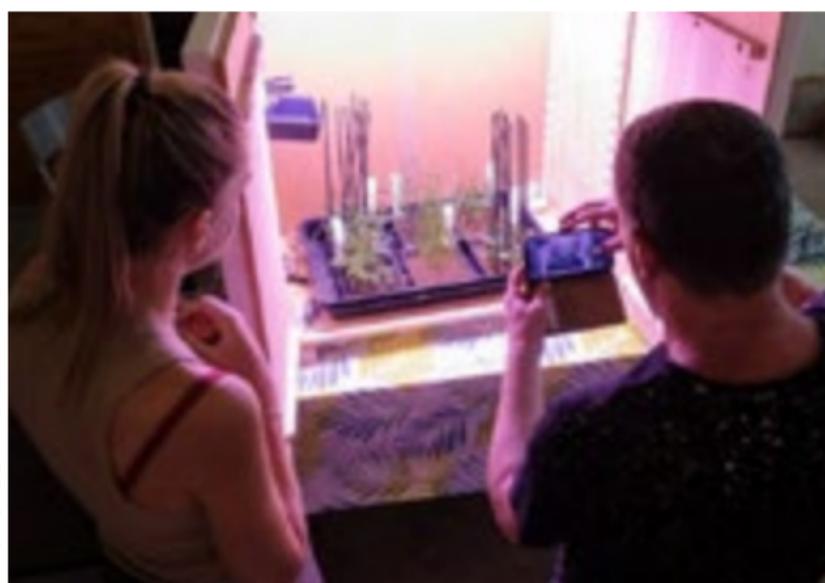


PHOTO GUY ACKERMANS



Growing rye in an underground bunker

This year, rye and peas were grown in an Arnhem bunker in replica Mars soil. LED panels simulated a day-night rhythm and produced heat. Although the temperature in the bunker was 12 degrees Celsius, the greenhouses insulated with polystyrene reached a growth-friendly 20 degrees. The trials are the latest stage in the Mars research of ecologist Wieger Wamelink of Wageningen Environmental Research. Wamelink is performing growth experiments in a bunker as life on Mars will need to be underground because of the radiation. 'It turns out to be more difficult than expected. It took a while to get the automatic water dosage system working properly, for example. The growth trials were to test whether we could get a functioning system, and we did in the end.'

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