



Strange New Worlds: The Search for Alien Planets and Life beyond Our Solar System

Ray Jayawardhana

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In *Strange New Worlds*, renowned astronomer Ray Jayawardhana brings news from the front lines of the epic quest to find planets--and alien life--beyond our solar system. Only in the past two decades, after millennia of speculation, have astronomers begun to discover planets around other stars--thousands in fact. Now they are closer than ever to unraveling distant twins of the Earth. In this book, Jayawardhana vividly recounts the stories of the scientists and the remarkable breakthroughs that have ushered in this extraordinary age of exploration. He describes the latest findings--including his own--that are challenging our view of the cosmos and casting new light on the origins and evolution of planets and planetary systems. He reveals how technology is rapidly advancing to support direct observations of Jupiter-like gas giants and super-Earths--rocky planets with several times the mass of our own planet--and how astronomers use biomarkers to seek possible life on other worlds.

Strange New Worlds provides an insider's look at the cutting-edge science of today's planet hunters, our prospects for discovering alien life, and the debates and controversies at the forefront of extrasolar-planet research.

In a new afterword, Jayawardhana explains some of the most recent developments as we search for the first clues of life on other planets.

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