

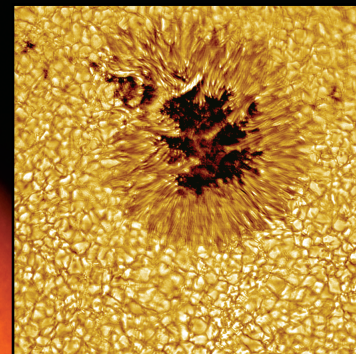
# Sunspots



Scale image  
of Earth

## What is a sunspot?

- The large dark area is a sunspot.
- Sunspots are cooler than their surroundings.
- Sunspots are areas of magnetic pressure.
- Notice the surface of the Sun is not smooth due to continuously rising heat. It is like the surface of boiling water.



Close-up view of a sunspot

## Location and size of sunspots

- Most sunspots form along the equator of the Sun.
- The Sun is so large that many sunspots are the size of Earth!

Earths

Diameter of Earth



Use this ruler to measure a sunspot

## The sunspot cycle

- The number of sunspots changes each year.
- Astronomers have recorded the number and location of sunspots for hundreds of years.
- There is a pattern to the change; the spots increase from 0 to about 150 every five years and then decrease to 0.
- Increased sunspot activity affects Earth. The signals transmitted by radio and satellite may be interrupted and our weather may be affected.

Sunspot Cycle 1915–2000

