

JAN: Welcome to this episode of Science Mythbusters! I'm Jan!

KENDRA: And I'm Kendra!

JAN: One of the hot topics in our mythbusters files is the Planet Mars. With the success of the Martian Rovers that are collecting data even as we stand here, there is a a lot of talk in the news about the so-called Red Planet.

KENDRA: But is Mars really red? Or do the photos we get from space only make it appear that way? We're here to find out whether the soil really is the color of a bulls eye.

JAN: Here are some photos of Mars that might support the "Red Planet" myth.

KENDRA: Let's find out what the soil is really made from.

JAN: Scientists have been sending unmanned spacecraft to orbit Mars since the 1970s Voyager missions. They have known for a long time that Martian soil is made of hematic dust...that is, rock such as hematite that has been weathered for a long time. Check out the color of this piece of hematite.

KENDRA: And hematite is an iron based rock. So, is the surface a rusty red color?

JAN: Kind of a light to moderate yellow brown, according to scientists. In fact, butterscotch would be a better term!

KENDRA: Really? Then why all the pictures on the internet and in books of a red Mars?

JAN: Photos can be manipulated to just about any color you want. And Mars, while not truly red, is the closest thing to a red planet in our solar system. Here's a recent view that gives a truer picture of how the planet appears to the human eye.

KENDRA: So I'd say this myth is officially....

JAN AND KENDRA: BUSTED!!!