

Mineral Spotlight: Willemite

Though usually unassuming in plain light, willemite is well known for its distinctive, neon green fluorescence under UV light. It's one of the main minerals in the famously fluorescent "Christmas rocks" from Franklin, New Jersey. The red fluorescence in Franklin rocks comes from calcite crystals. Willemite is most typically found in oxidized zinc deposits and metamorphosed limestones like those found underneath Franklin – its chemical formula is Zn_2SiO_4 (a zinc silicate).

Willemite was named in 1830 in honor of King Willem I of the Netherlands. Similarly, a red variety of willemite is known as troostite for Dutch-American mineralogist Gerard Troost.

This feature was posted on Dice Museum social media by Museum curator Jillian Herlinger on 10/18/2022.

