

## Mineral Spotlight: Tourmaline

The name "tourmaline" actually refers to a group of cyclosilicate minerals that can be diverse in color, but tend to take a distinctive crystalline form—long pillars, sometimes forming acicular needles. Tourmaline minerals are distinctive because of their color zoning – one crystal may have multiple distinct colors. Watermelon tourmaline is tourmaline that is zoned pink and green.

Tourmaline has been highly prized as a gemstone throughout history. The mineral was carved into stamps in the 2nd and 3rd centuries and has been used for jewelry for centuries. It was brought to Europe from Sri Lanka by the Dutch East India company, which sometimes called it "the Sri Lankan Magnet" because it could attract and then repel hot ashes due to its pyroelectric properties.

This feature was posted on Dice Museum social media by Museum curator Jillian Herlinger on 11/8/2022.

