

"Wise and strong is he who leaves his heart open and searches without fear."

--The Monna



Image above: Space shuttle Endeavour climbs toward orbit after its liftoff at 6:03 p.m. EDT. Photo credit: NASA/Sandra Joseph, Kevin O'Connell

Space shuttle Endeavour and its crew of seven astronauts are embarking on the STS-127 mission to the International Space Station. Launch occurred on time at 6:03 p.m. EDT on Wednesday, July 15 from NASA's Kennedy Space Center in Florida.

Endeavour is due to return to Kennedy on July 31 with a late-morning touchdown on Kennedy's Shuttle Landing Facility.

lanuginous

\luh-NOO-juh-nus\
Adjective



– A great blue heron stands tall in the water, perhaps looking for food. More gray than blue, with a yellowish bill and black legs, it has a brownish-buff colored neck with a black border and white in front of its neck with a vertical black streak. The bird's head is white with a black stripe above its eye and covered with **lanuginous** hair. We find these in Florida quite often inhabiting our lakes, ponds, rivers and marshes – sometimes in my backyard! Their principal food is fish or frogs but may feed on small mammals, reptiles and occasionally birds.

Meaning

: Covered with down or fine soft hair: downy

Example Sentence

"The Leaves of the young Branches are like those of the Quince, green without, and white and lanuginous underneath, and serve for Food for the Elephants." (Monfieur Pomet, "Figs," *History of Druggs*, 1709)

Did you know?

You're likely to come across "lanuginous" in only a few contexts, botany and spelling bees being the best candidates. In other contexts, the more common term is "downy." "Lanuginous" has an unsurprising pedigree. It's from the Latin word "lanuginosus," which is in turn from "lanugo," the Latin word for "down." ("Lanugo" is also an English word used especially to refer to the soft woolly hair that covers the fetus of some mammals.) "Lanugo" itself is from "lana," meaning "wool," a root also at work in "lanolin," the term for wool grease that's refined for use in ointments and cosmetics.

*Indicates the sense illustrated in the example sentence.

Best Regards,
Ron Van Alstyne

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