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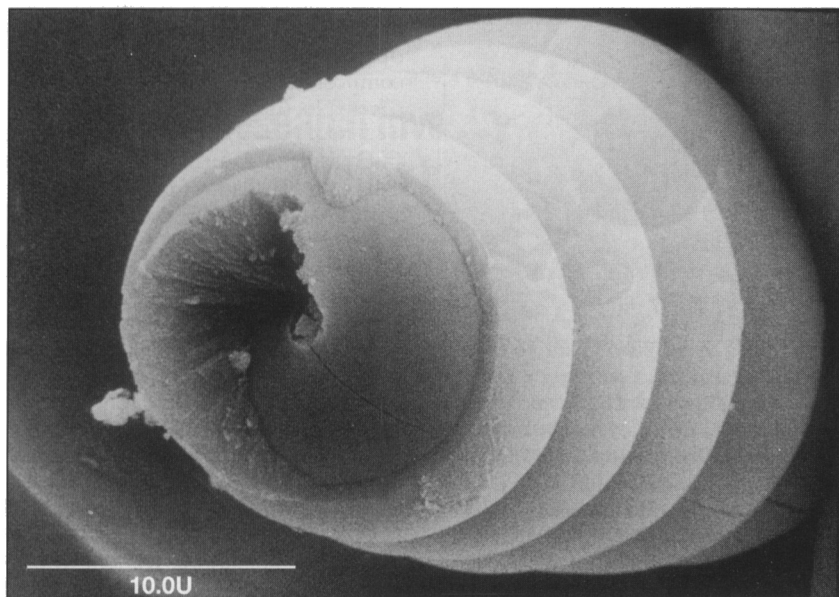
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further questions, please contact:  
E-MRS, BP 20, 67037 Strasbourg Cedex 2, France  
Fax 33 (0)3: 88 10 63 43  
emrs@phase.c-strasbourg.fr  
<http://www-emrs.c-strasbourg.fr>

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A carpenter's wood screw, no doubt. The tapered helix, at roughly two thousand threads per inch, would make a fine screw indeed. This month's *EDITOR'S CHOICE* image, by an interesting twist of fate, might well be of a fastener, but one for use only by the Divine Carpenter. It is made entirely of convoluted calcium carbonate, but unlike the calcite phase of lowly limestone and majestic marble, it is composed of spherulites of the metastable polymorph, vaterite. The divine part stems from its pattern being the result of growth mediation by charged polypeptides, in this case poly(aspartate), a close cousin of the well-known artificial sweetener. The process mimics that of biomineralization, fundamental to our bones and other components of the mortal coil. The "creators," L.A. Gower and D.A. Tirrell (*J. Crystal Growth* 191 [1998] p. 153), showed how a minute quantity of the organic inhibits crystal growth of the usual rhombohedral calcite and instead causes an ordered hydrated carbonate membrane to form that acts as a template for the episodic helicoidal outgrowths from vaterite aggregates. It appears that this field of research is moving much faster than a snail's pace toward explaining the spirality of, among other species, the snail.

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