



Acicular

Millerite

"Acicular" is from a Latin word "acicula" that means "a little needle." Acicular crystals are minerals that crystallize as long, thin, hair-like needles. The needles are extremely fragile. Even a light touch can break them off. The list of minerals that form acicular crystals include aurichalcite, artinite and millerite. The millerite pictured on this card is from the Sterling mine, Antwerp, New York.
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Arborescent

Copper

"Arborescent" means "like a tree". Some minerals, like this copper specimen from Itauz, Djezkazgan, Central Kazakhstan, grow in forms that resemble tree branches and so are described as arborescent.
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Scepter

Amethyst on Milky Quartz

A "scepter" is a long stick that is held by a King as a sign of the king's power. The end of the scepter is topped with a large ornament that is covered with beautiful jewels. A "scepter crystal" is one in which there is a long, lower portion that is topped with a larger, wider crystal termination. This scepter is from the African nation of Namibia.
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Twinned Crystals

Staurolite

There are times when two or more crystals grow together at a specific angle. When this happens, the crystal is called a "twinned crystal." Pictured here is a staurolite twin. In this specimen two individual crystals have grown together in a cross formation.
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Magnetism

Magnetite, Lodestone

The ancient Roman naturalist, Pliny the Elder, told about a shepherd named Magnes. Magnes was out watching his sheep when the nails in his shoes stuck to the rocks in the ground. Items made out of iron, like nails, are attracted to and stick to magnetite. This property is called "magnetism." Massive magnetite is called "lodestone."
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Pseudomorph

"The Atacamouse"

The word "pseudomorph" literally means "false form." A pseudomorph is a mineral that starts off as a particular mineral. But when the chemical environment changes, the chemistry of the mineral changes. The mineral has the shape of the original mineral but the chemistry of another mineral. Pictured here is a mouse that has been changed into the copper mineral atacamite.
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Rosette

Barite

There are some minerals in which many individual crystals grow together in such a way that they resemble a flower. Any rose-like crystal groups are called "rosettes." The minerals that typically form rosettes are gypsum, barite and hematite. Pictured here is a "rose" made of intergrown barite crystals. The barite grew in red sandstone and the red sand was trapped in the barite.
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Phantom

Quartz

Sometimes a crystal will grow to a certain size and then stop growing. Later on, the crystal growth started again, but the new material can be a different color. When the growth is all complete, the larger crystal looks like it has a smaller crystal trapped inside. The original, smaller crystal is the same shape as the larger, later crystal. Mineralogists call this situation a "phantom crystal."
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Dollars

Pyrite

Among the most unusual and popular mineral specimens are the "Pyrite Dollars" from Sparta, Illinois. They are found in coal deposits, forming between layers of black shale. The crystals grow from a center point like rays of light moving out from the sun. The pyrite forms into thin, flat discs that collectors call "Dollars." They really do look like big coins!
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