

SolarCell

Flaming Pear Software

What it does

How to install

Quick start

The sun

Flares

Diffraction spikes

Halo

Bow

Memory dots

Hints

FAQ

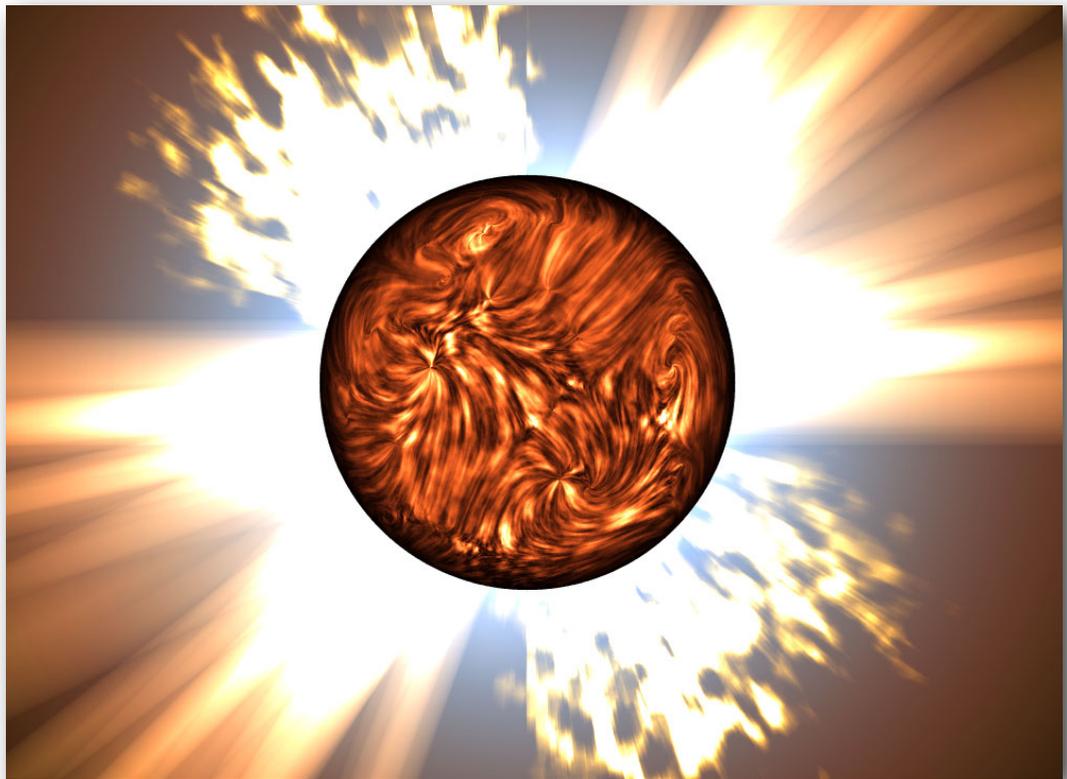
Versions

How to purchase

Questions

What it does

SolarCell is a plug-in for paint programs. It draws moons and planets.



How to install

Illustrated installation instructions are online at www.flamingpear.com/faq.html .

To use this software, you need a paint program which accepts standard

Photoshop 3.02 plugins.

Just put the plug-in filter into the folder where your paint program expects to find it. If you have Photoshop, the folder is Photoshop:Plugins:Filters or Photoshop:Plug-ins. You must restart Photoshop before it will notice the new plug-in. It will appear in the menus as Filters->Flaming Pear->SolarCell.

Most other paint programs follow a similar scheme.

If you have Paint Shop Pro: you have to create a new folder, put the plug-in filter into it, and then tell PSP to look there.

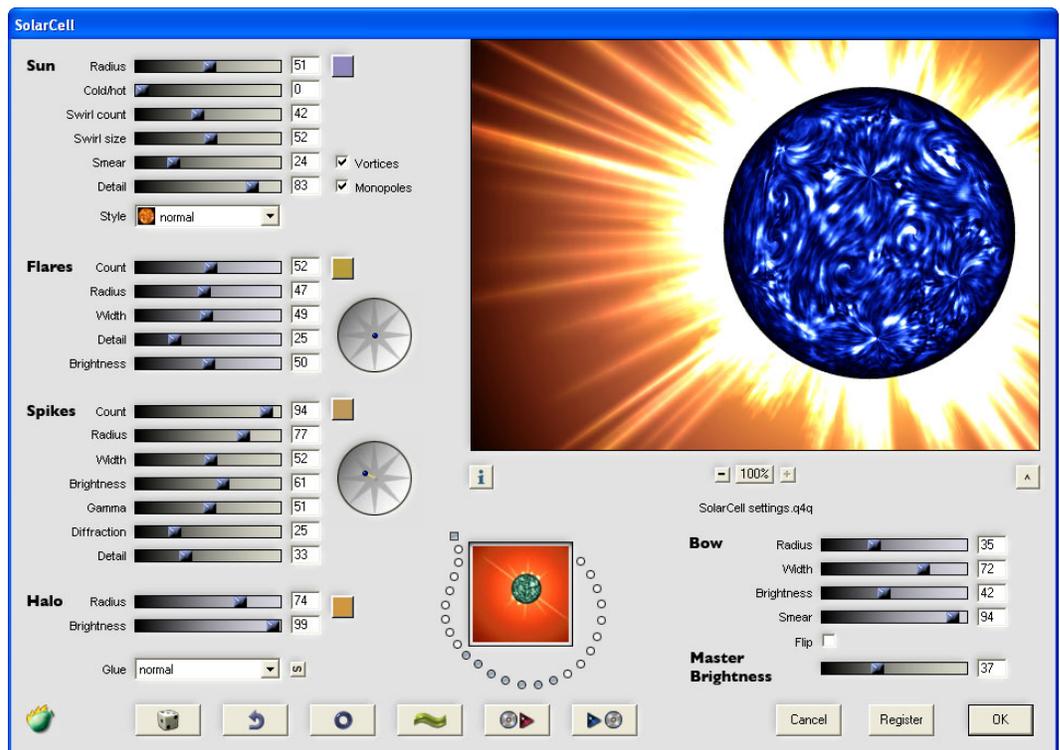
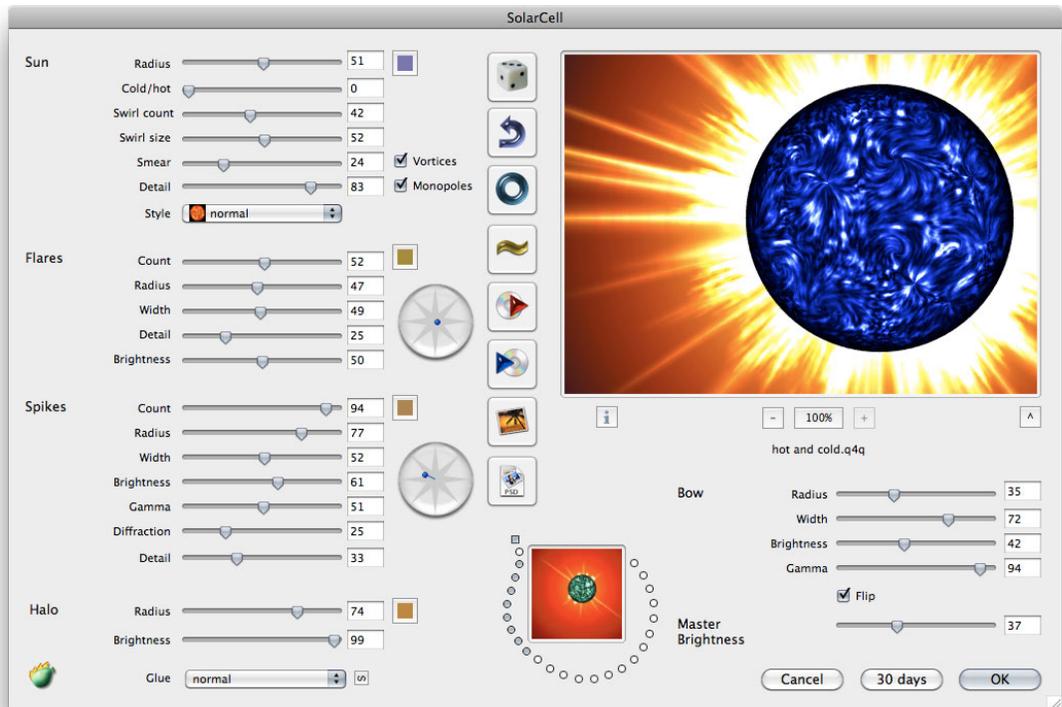
PSP 8, 9, X, XI, and X2:

Choose the menu File-> Preferences-> File Locations... In the dialog box that appears, choose Plug-ins from the list. Click "Add." If you are using PSP 8 or 9, click "Browse". Now choose the folder that contains the plug-in.

The plug-in is now installed. To use it, open any image and select an area. From the menus, choose Effects->Plugins->Flaming Pear->SolarCell.

Quick start

When you invoke SolarCell, a dialog box will appear.



If you just want to make a sun quickly, click the dice button until you see a sun you like; then click OK.



dice

There are several controls for each of the five elements in a sun...

[The sun](#)

[Flares](#)

[Diffraction spikes](#)

[Halo](#)

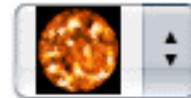
[Bow](#)

...and a few other controls that affect the whole image.

The sun

The sun's disk can be filled with fiery swirls, or it can be a flat color, or black like an eclipse.

Sun style lets you choose the sun disk type.



sun style

Color Button chooses the sun's color.

Radius is the size of the sun.

The remaining disk controls only affect the fiery-swirls disk.



color button

Cold/Hot biases the sun's color toward cold (blue) or hot (red) hues.

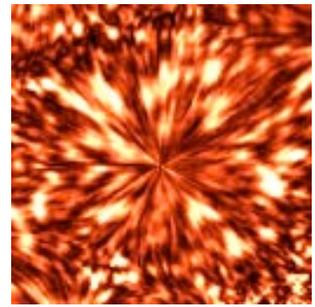
Swirl count set the number of swirls in the sun's surface, making it look more like fire.

Swirl Size sets the size of the swirls. If the swirls are large enough to overlap, interesting patterns appear. Setting this slider to a high value may take a very long time to produce a result.

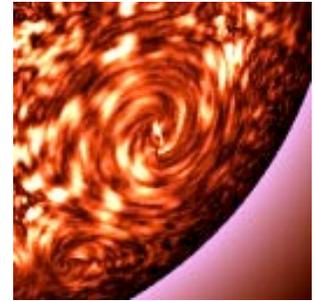
Smear produces longer or shorter streaks in the swirls.

Detail sets the overall scale of the lumpy pattern on the sun's surface.

Monopoles and **Vortices** activate the two types of swirls. Monopoles are streaks radiating from a point. Vortices are spiral whirlpools.



monopoles



vortices

Flares

Flares are jets of flame shooting out from the edge of the sun.

Color button sets the flares' color.

Count sets how many flares there are.

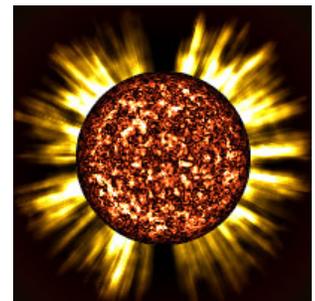
Radius sets the size of flares.

Width sets the width of the individual flares.

Detail adjusts the lumpiness of the flares.

Brightness adjusts the overall brightness of the flares.

The **Orientation control** positions the flares. The further you move the blue dot from the center of the control, the more the flares will cluster together and lie parallel to the line. If you want uniformly distributed flares, just put the dot in the center.



sun with flares



orientation control

Diffraction spikes

In real-life photographs, diffraction spikes appear around bright lights due to flaws in the optics. SolarCell draws these spikes to produce the illusion of glaring brightness.

Color button sets the color of the spikes.

Count sets the number of spikes.

Radius sets the spikes' length.

Width sets the spikes' width.

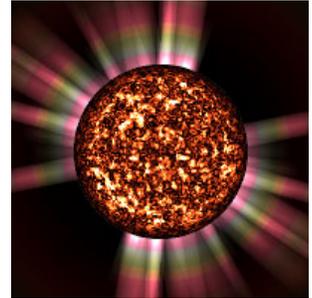
Brightness sets the overall brightness of the spikes.

Gamma changes the contrast of the spikes to produce a softer or harder appearance.

Diffraction adds stripes of subtle colors across the spikes. At zero, there are no stripes. At 100, the stripes are at their most prominent.

Diffraction Scale sets the width of the color stripes.

The **Orientation control** positions the spikes. The further you move the blue dot from the center of the control, the more the spikes will cluster together and lie parallel to the line. If you want uniformly distributed spikes, just put the dot in the center.



sun with spikes



orientation control

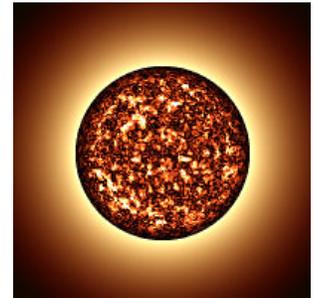
Halo

The halo is a bright circle of color around the sun that helps to convey an impression of brightness and of air between the sun and the observer.

Color button sets the halo's color.

Radius sets the width of the halo. The radius is added to the sun's size, so you can change the size of the sun and the halo will move with it.

Brightness adjusts the contrast of the halo so it can taper off slowly or rapidly.



sun with halo

Bow

The bow is a rainbow around the sun. When it's bright, it produces a fantasy-like effect. When it's dim, it lends a subtle variation of hue.

Radius is not added to the sun's radius; it can be less than the sun's radius. This way the bow can overlap the sun, which is sometimes useful.

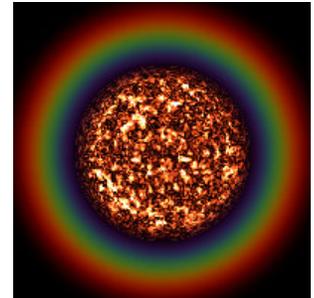
Width sets the bow's width.

Bow brightness makes the bow brighter.

Bow Blur sets how much the colors blur together.

When this control is turned up high, the bow will have subtle colors like those seen around the moon on a partly cloudy night.

Flip reverses the order of colors in the bow.



sun with bow

Other controls

Dice: This randomizes the settings. Click it as much as you want to see different effects.



dice

Reset: Gives you the factory settings.



reset

Random seed: This changes the arrangement of all the random elements like land, craters, and synthetic clouds.



random seed

Position of sun Reposition the sun by clicking anywhere in the preview area.

Glue: Lets you combine the result image with the original, instead of replacing it. The **next-glue** button advances to the next glue mode.



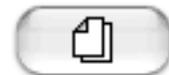
next glue

Send to photo manager: Sends the result to iPhoto (on Macintosh).



send to photo manager

Export to PSD: Exports the result to a .psd file.



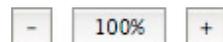
export to PSD

Make Gallery: Builds a web page showing all the presets in a folder that you choose.



make gallery

Plus, % and minus buttons: If the selected image area is bigger than the preview, these buttons let you zoom in and out. Drag the preview to move it.



minus, %, plus

Load preset: SolarCell comes with some presets, which are files containing settings. To load one, click this button and browse for a preset file.



load preset

Save preset: When you make an effect you like, click this button to save the settings in a file.



save preset

Undo backs up one step.



undo

Info: briefly explains the controls.



info

Three more buttons:

OK: Applies the effect to your image.

Cancel: Dismisses the plug-in, and leaves the image unchanged.

Register: Allows you to type in a registration code and remove the time limit from the demo.

Memory dots

Although you can [save your settings permanently to files](#), you can also stash settings in memory dots.

Click an empty dot to stash the current settings in it.

Click a full dot to retrieve its settings.

Hover the mouse over a dot to see what it contains.

Option-click to erase a dot on Macintosh.

Right-click to erase a dot on Windows.

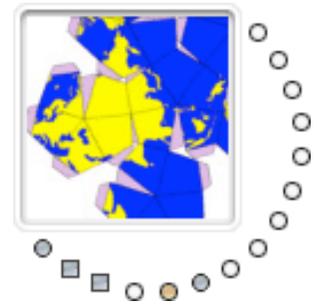
If a dot is orange, SolarCell's currently using that dot's settings.

Dots remember their contents until you erase them. If you'd rather make a temporary dot that forgets when you exit SolarCell, control-click it. Temporary dots are square.

When you start SolarCell, it puts the starting settings in a temporary dot. That way it's easy to start over without exiting the plug-in.

On Mac, you can drag-and-drop settings files from the central memory well.

You can build a web page showing how the current image would look with every memdot setting. Just option-click (Mac) or right-click (Windows) on the big memdot image.



memory dots

- empty
- full
- current
- temporary

Hints

Use the "Composite" item in the map mode popup menu to draw the sun without blackness behind it. In a regular layer, Composite will draw the sun onto a transparent field. In a background layer, the sun will be combined with the original image.

If all four color controls — sun, spike, halo, and corona — are similar, then results are realistic. Using vivid, unrelated colors produces a surreal effect.

Version history

Version 1.92

Fixes previews in 16-bit color.

Version 1.90

64-bit version for Macintosh.

Version 1.80

64-bit version for Windows.

Version 1.7.1

Fixes a crash that can happen on Macintosh PowerPC machines.

Version 1.7

Adds convenience features to the interface. The Mac version is resizable.

Version 1.6

Fixes a Windows problem where the plug-in wouldn't remember its registration when it was installed in one user account but activated in another. Fixes a Macintosh problem where the plug-in could have bad settings or crash when installed on a machine for the first time.

Version 1.52

Universal binary for Macintosh. Preset files have icons. Works as a Smart Filter in Adobe Photoshop CS3 for Macintosh.

Version 1.5

Works in 16-bit-per-component color.

Version 1.35

Recordable as a Photoshop action.

Version 1.32

Fixes a crash that could happen when using the menus under Windows XP.

Version 1.31

Fixes the appearance of text in the interface when running under Mac OS X 10.2.3 .

Version 1.3

Adds an Undo button.

Version 1.2

The Compositing glue mode now works properly in layers.

Version 1.1f

Fixes a crash that sometimes happened with ImageReady on Macintosh.

Version 1.1e

Fixes strange bow colors that may appear when SolarCell is used with some paint programs.

Version 1.1d

Improves compatibility with non-Photoshop paint programs.

Version 1.1c

Fixes a bug which sometimes caused the color buttons to crash.

Version 1.1b

Fixes a slow startup bug which caused SolarCell to run very slowly the first time it was used.

Version 1.1

The first public release.

How to purchase

You can place an order online [here](#). A secure server for transactions is available.

Questions

The software, documentation, and supporting materials are made by Flaming Pear Software. Answers to common technical questions appear on our [support page](#), and free updates appear periodically on the [download page](#).

Trouble with your order? Orders are handled by [Kagi](#); please contact them at admin@kagi.com .

For bug reports and technical questions about the software, please write to support@flamingpear.com .

©2012 Flaming Pear Software