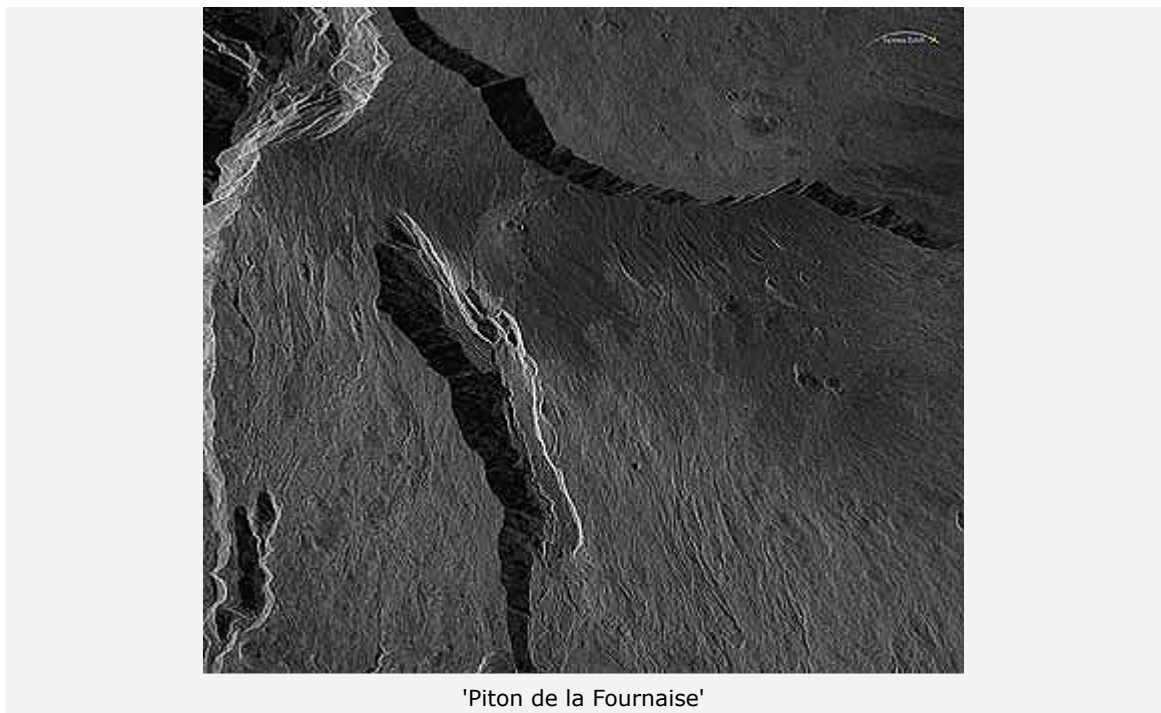


News Archive

TerraSAR-X image of the month: The volcano 'Piton de la Fournaise' on the island of La Réunion

26 June 2009



The image, taken by the German radar satellite TerraSAR-X, shows the volcano 'Piton de la Fournaise' (Furnace Peak) in the south of the island of La Réunion (Indian Ocean). This is the last active volcano on the island and is 2631 metres high. By means of very precise repeat-pass interferometric measurements, TerraSAR-X is able to detect even small movements of the Earth's surface, thus supporting volcano monitoring.

The image was taken on 5 June 2008. It was acquired in spotlight mode with a resolution of two metres. It covers an area of 11×10 kilometres.

The TerraSAR-X mission

TerraSAR-X is the first German satellite that has been manufactured under what is known as a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) between the German Aerospace Center (Deutsches Zentrum für Luft- und Raumfahrt; DLR) and Astrium GmbH in Friedrichshafen. The satellite travels around the Earth in a polar orbit and records unique, high-quality X-band radar data about the entire planet using its active antenna. TerraSAR-X works regardless of weather conditions, cloud cover or absence of daylight, and is able to provide radar data with a resolution of down to one metre.

DLR is responsible for using TerraSAR-X data for scientific purposes. It is also responsible for planning and implementing the mission as well as controlling the satellite. Astrium built the satellite and shares the costs of developing and using it. Infoterra GmbH, a subsidiary company founded specifically for this purpose by Astrium, is responsible for marketing the data commercially.

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