



Mineral Spotlight: Rhodochrosite

It's Wednesday, which means it's time for the mineral of the week! This week's featured mineral is rhodochrosite. We have many beautiful samples of rhodochrosite here in the museum, but chief among them is our cross section of rhodochrosite stalactites (image 1). The rings represent the growth of stalactites over time, sort of like tree rings! Its stunning pink color comes from the manganese (Mn) in its chemical structure (MnCO_3).

Manganese is known for making minerals this vivid pink color when it's in a certain, stable oxidation state (2+). Rhodochrosite is a national symbol of Argentina, where it is found in hydrothermal veins alongside silver. Likewise, it's the state gem of Colorado. Though beautiful in color, it's too soft to be commonly found in jewelry, sitting at a 3.5-4 on the Moh's Hardness Scale. Its most common use is as an ore of manganese.

This feature was posted on Dice Museum social media by Museum curator Jillian Herlinger on 5/18/2022.

