



Galeolaria caespitosa encrusting the piles of Dromana Pier. *Galeolaria* tubes at medium (top right) and close range (right). At low tide, the worm seals the tube with a tiny round black operculum. When the water rises, it opens the door and extends its tentacles to feed.



Omnivores and scavengers

These animals eat plant and animal material in various proportions.



Sea-urchin *Heliocidaris erythrogramma* (about 7 cm without spines) Eats mainly living algae



Sea-urchin *Amblypneustes ovum* (about 5 cm) This washed-up urchin has lost most of its short spines.



Sea-star *Meridiastra calcar* (about 5 cm) Various colours including red, blue and green



Parvulastra exigua (to 2 cm) Eats mainly small algae



Washed-up carapace of seaweed crab *Naxia aurita* (about 4 cm) When alive, it is covered with living algae, sponges etc., and you won't see it until it moves.

Seaweed and seagrass

True seaweeds are algae. They have no roots and cling to hard surfaces such as rocks and shells with their 'holdfasts'. All their nutrients come from the water. They do not have flowers but propagate by spores, as do ferns and fungi on land. The three main groups of seaweeds, classified by their photosynthetic pigments, are:

- red algae (Rhodophyta), not always red and mostly found sub-tidally or washed up on the shore
- brown algae (Phaeophyta), ranging in colour from yellow to dark brown
- green algae (Chlorophyta)

You will encounter living seaweeds on shore platforms and in rock pools. Many more species are to be found washed up on the shore.

The putrid smell of decomposing seaweeds can make you feel nauseous. One component of the smell is hydrogen sulfide or 'rotten-egg gas' produced by bacteria which metabolise sulfur compounds in the weed.



Red algae in the 'Coralline' family, with the common brown alga *Neptunes necklace Hormosira* sp. towards the left. Close-up of coralline alga shows hard lime-rich segments.



Sea lettuce *Ulva* sp.