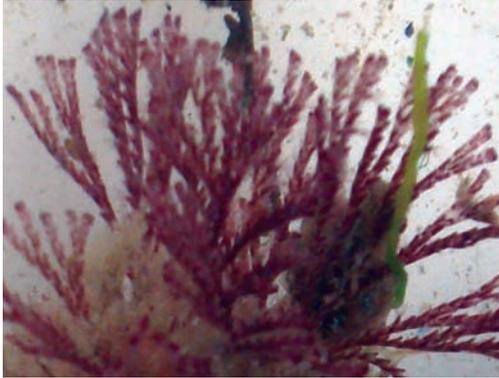


GUIDE TO MARINE INVADERS IN THE GULF OF MAINE

Bugula neritina

purple bushy bryozoan



Salem Sound Coastwatch

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

- A deep purple to brownish red bushy branching colonial animal
- Looks like a small clump of purple seaweed, but actually consists of individual filter-feeding zooids (animals) that are visible with the naked eye
- Colony branches are made up of alternating double strands of connected zooids
- Each zooid is only about 1mm in length, while the overall colony can be several centimeters across



Adriann Gittenberger

HABITAT PREFERENCE

- Attaches to hard substrates, such as on low intertidal or subtidal rocks and on the sides of floating dock
- Live in marine waters with salinity 30-35 ppt
- Common in warmer waters around the world but tolerant of temperature ranges found in New England

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INVASION STATUS & ECOLOGICAL CONCERNS

Bugula neritina is now found world-wide and has become a common fouling organism on floating docks. So far in New England waters, it is not as dominant or abundant as it has become in other portions of its non-native range, but further study is necessary to determine its local ecological impact.

SIMILAR SPECIES

There are three native *Bugula* species in the region. They are similar in appearance to *B. neritina*, except in color, being generally tan or off-white. Additionally, *B. neritina* shape is more bushy than the native *Bugula turrita*, which has an overall whorled or spirally-branching appearance, or the native *Bugula simplex* that has a flattened, fan-like appearance. More definitive identification requires microscopic examination of zooid structures.

Colonies of hydroids (animals that also use small tentacles to feed) grow in a similar manner and on similar surfaces, but their branches are not made up of zooid chains.

There are several species of red algae that appear similar at first glance, but none of them are comprised of zooids.

This identification card is one of a series produced by Salem Sound Coastwatch (www.salemsound.org) highlighting introduced species that pose a threat to the marine environments of Massachusetts and the Gulf of Maine. These cards were funded by the MA Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, Office of Coastal Zone Management. For additional information on these species or to report sightings, please visit www.mass.gov/czm/invasives/monitor/reporting.htm.



Native *Bugula turrita* (left) and invader *Bugula neritina* (right)

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