
Algal Pressings

Level

3-8+

Key question

How are marine alga pressed?

Key outcome

Identify features of algae that determine their classification.

What you need

Clipboard
Paper, pencil
Petri dish or flat plate
Paintbrush
Absorbent paper
Newspaper
Glue
Heavy book
Field guide to seaweeds

What you do

There are many varieties of algae including those called seaweed. Try to collect different ones in small quantities.

1. Collect as many types of algae as possible. Place each in a dish filled with water and use a small paintbrush to spread the algae out.
2. Carefully lift the algae onto a sheet of absorbent drawing paper and use the paint brush to spread it out again. The easiest way to do this is to slide a piece of paper into the water under the seaweed and raise the paper slowly, allowing the water to drain off. Place another sheet of paper on top of the algae.
3. Press the algae by placing the paper wrapped in newspaper and place a heavy weight on top or use a plant press. An old telephone book makes a good press. Allow this to stand for at least a week. When dried, use craft glue to stick the algae to the paper.
4. Use text books to find out the scientific name of the algae. Write this on the sheet of paper along with the date the pressing was done.

Adapted from *ReefEd*, and Moroney et al., *Coastal Activities for Primary Schools*.

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Extensions

Devise methods of grouping the different types of algae.

Use the algae to create unique cards and writing paper.

Press other plants.

References

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Cribb, A.B. 1996, *Seaweeds of Queensland: A Naturalist's Guide*, Queensland Naturalists' Club. (Available from QNC, Dept. Anatomical Sciences, University of Qld 4072 for \$15 and \$3 postage.)

Hughes, J.M.R. and Davis, G.L. 1989, *Aquatic Plants of Tasmania*, University of Melbourne Press, Dept. Geography.