

NEPTUNE GRASS



Photo by Meet the Sea

Environmental importance

The Posidonia meadows around the Balearic Islands are a UNESCO World Heritage site thanks to the environmental benefits they offer. It houses up to 400 types of algae and thousands of animal species, making it an essential part of the ocean ecosystem. The Posidonia is also able to absorb very high quantities of carbon dioxide - around 15 times more than a similarly sized part of the Amazon rainforest! Additionally, because it is so sensitive to pollution, Neptune grass is often used as an indicator of the environmental quality of the water.

Neptune grass also plays a vital role in preventing coastal erosion. In winter, Posidonia meadows form a barrier against high waves and soften the impact on coasts in the local area. As a result, the sand beaches in Ibiza have lost much less ground to the ocean than other areas in recent years.

Scientific Name:

Posidonia Oceanica

Key Information

An aquatic plant with roots, a trunk, leaves, flowers and fruit.

Neptune grass is endemic to the Mediterranean, found in well-lit areas up to 80 metres deep. It takes root on the sand bottoms, fixing it, which is why it is very important in the creation of beaches.

Curiosities

Historically, Neptune grass has been used to build the roofs of local houses. In the winter, storms lead to piles of dried Neptune grass building up near the coast. The dry grass is an excellent insulator and the salt and minerals absorbed by the grass act as a bug repellent, making this a highly valuable building material.

Threats

Unfortunately, a number of factors threaten the growth of Neptune grass despite efforts to protect it. It suffers greatly in polluted water, and takes a long time to recover if it is uprooted by anchoring or trawling. Even though it's forbidden, some people still anchor in areas with Neptune grass, showing the importance of sea education in protecting species with a vital role in countering the damage of the climate crisis.

The impact of other factors are less clear, but after measuring highs of 29°C in August 2023 and 2024, Meet the Sea are also concerned about the effect of rising ocean temperatures on Posidonia meadows.



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