PEACOCK'S TAIL

Photo by Meet the Sea

Scientific Name:
Padina pavonica

Key Information

The peacock's tail is a type of seaweed that can be found in the Indian Ocean, the Pacific Ocean, the Atlantic Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea.

Because it is usually shades of cream and brown, it's also sometimes referred to as the 'turkey-feather algae'.

This seaweed is distinctive because of its curved fronds which can grow up to 10cm in diameter.

These fan-shaped fronds are important to its survival, as this form maximises the amount of sunlight they can absorb in order to photosynthesise beneath the waves.

Environmental importance

Peacock's tail fronds provide shelter for small marine organisms such as juvenile fish and invertebrates, helping them stay safe while feeding.

It is also a useful indicator of the health of the water around it, because it is highly sensitive to pollution and changes in the water quality.

Habitat

The peacock's tail survives best in clear, shallow waters. They are usually found in close to the shore, often in places with sand, clay or silt, or in pools or rocky areas.

Curiosities

This seaweed is rare for its ability to absorb calcium carbonate from the water around it. This is then deposited as crystals on the surfact of the seaweed's fronds, which protects it from creatures who would otherwise eat it, as well as some security against high light levels and strong waves.

Because of its calcified surface, the peacock's tail also contributes to calcium carbonate production which helps with coastal sediment formation.

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