

Wireweed

(Sargassum muticum)



Habitat: Aquatic, marine
Family name: Sargassaceae
Common name/s: Japanese Wireweed, Japweed



Wireweed meadow

Description:

wireweed which has the scientific name *Sargassum muticum*. Other common names for this species include Japweed, Japanese Wireweed and Strangle weed.

Wireweed is a large brown seaweed that grows attached to rocks by a perennial holdfast up to 5 cm in diameter.

From this holdfast the main axis (equivalent to a stem in terrestrial plants) grows to a maximum of 5 cm high.

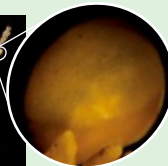


Wireweed meadow

The species has two distinct parts: the perennial, dark brown basal axes, and the lighter coloured annual primary laterals. The latter are shed or torn off in late summer.



Wireweed frond



Wireweed Bladder

During the summer months, the number of small round vesicles (2-6 mm stalked air vesicles providing buoyancy), increase.

Receptacles are most abundant in early autumn, just prior to the shedding of annual primary laterals.

Wireweed is most conspicuous on the shore during the summer months.

The reproductive receptacles are also stalked and develop in the sides of the laminae and are 1-2cm in length.

Wireweed is self-fertilising meaning that they can breed with themselves.



Wireweed in Autumn

The leaf-like laminae and primary lateral branches grow from the main axis.

In warm waters it can grow to 12 m long.



annual primary laterals



General Seaweed Structure & Terminology

