Botrylloides violaceus

Invasive to Maine

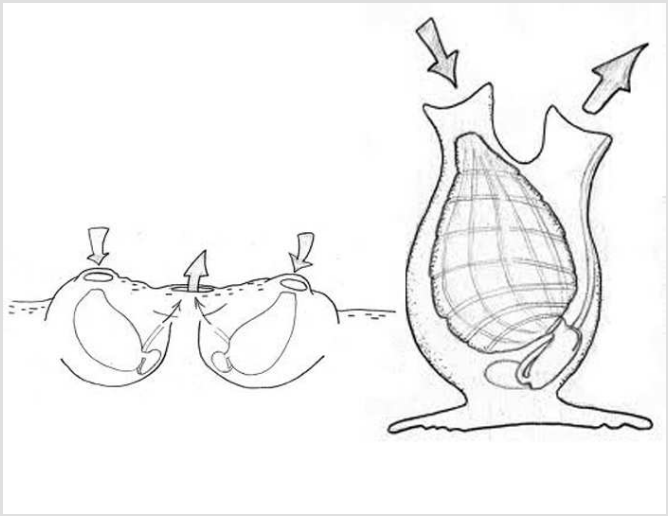
Orange Sheath Tunicate,
Chain Sea Squirt

Coastal
Rocky Intertidal and Subtidal

Zooid (Individual)

Luis A. Sorzano, Exotics Guides

Look for individuals (zooids) arranged in meandering, oval-shaped clusters. Each zooid has a tube-like body with syphons to filter water for food.



Full View

Vital Signs user C21, Falmouth Middle School

Look for colonial sheets 2 to 3 mm thick attached to rocks or submerged objects. Colors range from orange, brick red, yellow, tan, purple, or dark brown.

Growth Pattern

Vital Signs user Seasaw, Falmouth Middle School

Colonies may have lobes. The zooids of a colony are connected to each other by a network of blood vessels.Together they form a rubbery sheet.

Additional

Vital Signs user C21, Falmouth Middle School

The color is uniform (the same) within a colony. However, colonies range in color as shown in the above photo (two separate colonies).

Similar Species

Orange sheath tunicate is gelatinous in texture, more rigid and coarser than sponges and anemones. The individuals are arranged in a chain-like pattern, which distinguishes orange sheath tunicate from other tunicates.

Did You Know?

This invasive tunicate likely spread to the eastern coast of the US from ships. It may grow over other sessile (non-moving) organisms, smothering them. Colonies of Botrylloides can entirely cover submerged objects.

Researched and created by N. Waite, S. Donaldson & R. Hawl

Help us improve this species card! Contact us with your updates.

Gulf of Maine Research Institute

vital signs

www.vitalsignsme.org