



WHAT IS SEAWEED?

The UK is home to around 650 species of seaweed!
But what exactly is it?!

NOT A PLANT?

Seaweeds look like plants, but they are part of a different group to true plants. In fact they aren't even placed in the same kingdom. They do share an important feature though: they photosynthesize using chlorophyll.

IT'S MACROALGAE

All our UK seaweeds are in fact types of algae, specifically 'Macroalgae.' They are multicellular and visible to us without a microscope (when many other types of algae are not).

WHAT GROUPS ARE THERE?

Seaweed taxonomy is incredibly complicated! There are many different groups and scientists don't always agree on how they are classified. Within the UK however, 3 broad groups are normally recognised, distinguished by their colour:

GREEN

SEAWEEDES

Normally smaller, variety of shades of green

BROWN

SEAWEEDES

Usually large and leathery

RED

SEAWEEDES

Small, usually seen in rockpools and nearer the sea

Not all seaweeds have all these features, but a few things they might have include:

Blades

A bit like its leaves. Photosynthesis mostly takes place here

Bladders

These are filled with air and help the seaweed float allowing it closer to the sunlight

Stipe

Like a stem

Holdfast

A bit like its roots. Holds the seaweed to the substrate

Anchored to substrate

Most seaweeds anchor themselves to avoid being carried away

