



Cabrillo
Marine
Aquarium

FISHIN' FOR F.A.Q.'S



Sea Anemone

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 5

- Q.** Is it a plant or an animal?
- A.** Sea anemones might look like plants, but they are animals classified as marine *invertebrates*.
- Q.** How do you pronounce its unique name?
- A.** It is pronounced *uh-NEHM-uh-nee*. Say that 10 times fast! Sea anemones are in the *class Anthozoa*, which means flower-like animal. It is also named after the colorful, *terrestrial* Anemone flower.
- Q.** How does the sea anemone protect itself when the tide recedes?
- A.** It will force water out of its body, pull in its tentacles and fold inward for protection.
- Q.** Is it true that sea anemones spend most of their lives in the same spot?
- A.** Most sea anemones attach to hard surfaces with a sticky foot called a *pedal disk*. They can remain firmly fixed in one place or can detach themselves and go for a slow walk. A few species are *free-swimming* and can move with the current. They also have a gas chamber within their pedal disk, allowing them to float upside-down in the open sea.
- Q.** Is a sea jelly a relative of the sea anemone?
- A.** Yes, they are both in the *phylum Cnidaria*, and have a soft body with a ring of tentacles that surrounds a central mouth, plus toxic stinging cells called *nematocysts* to capture small prey. Do not worry, the sting from a sea anemone is not potent enough to seriously harm a person.
- Q.** How long can a sea anemone live?
- A.** Some species of sea anemones can live to be over 50 years old!

AT CMA

Green sea anemones are usually found at the Aquarium in tanks 1, 4 and in the Touch Tank!

Just for Laughs

- Q.** What happens when you throw a green rock into the sea?
- A.** It gets wet!

FUN FACTS

The bright green color of the Green sea anemone is partly due to its *symbiotic relationship* with the green algae living in its tissues. Under strong sunlight the algae is encouraged to grow and the sea anemone gets very green. When the anemone lives in more shaded areas the algae growth is inhibited and the anemone is less colorful, appearing pale-gray.

There are more than 1,000 sea anemone species found throughout the world's oceans.

A MEDICAL DRUG HAS BEEN DERIVED FROM THE SEA ANEMONE'S TISSUES THAT IS BEING TESTED TO TREAT HEART DISEASE.

Fast Facts on a Local Species

Common name:
Giant Green Anemone

Scientific Name:
Anthopleura xanthogrammica

Range: Alaska to Panama

Size: lengths up to 7 inches

Diet: urchins, shrimp & small fish

Life cycle: egg to larva, juvenile to adult

Average Lifespan: some can live over 50 years

Predators: nudibranchs, snails, fish & sea stars

Common Relatives: corals, jellies, sea fans and sea pens