



Video Transcript How To Collect An Ascidian

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- Today I am going to show you how to collect an ascidian for taxonomy studies.
- For this, you will need a knife or a spatula, individual bags, tubes or vials labeled with numbers, something to take notes of field information such as animal color, depth, substrate and the number of the bag with the sample, and an underwater camera to take pictures of live animals.
- Ascidians are filter-feeding animals and usually are found below the low tide line, always in water.
- Very few species may be found in the intertidal zone and the individuals found immersed during low tides are usually hidden underneath rocks.
- To find an ascidian, you have to look on hard substrates.
- Solitary ascidians look like small balls on the substrate, sometimes they are covered with incrustations, and less frequently, with only their colored tunic.
- Colonies look very much like sponges, but they have a more organized system of small apertures on the surface: the oral siphons.
- Also, ascidians close their siphons when touched, or simply when they feel vibrations in the water, while sponges do not close their pores and oscula.
- Before collecting an ascidian, it is important to take close-up pictures, photos should have a scale bar.
- Take note of its color, shape, appearance, depth and substrate.
- It is better to collect the animal with the substrate to avoid perforating the tunic.
- And most should be kept in bags completely filled with seawater or inside plastic vials in a cooler or buckets.
- Keep the samples cool in the boat when traveling back to the lab.

