

Plant of the Month — March 2020

Acetabularia caliculus J.V.Lamour.



Acetabularia caliculus (Mermaid's wineglass) is a small green seaweed that often grows in clusters on rocks or dead shells in shallow water. Plants have a calcified stalk that, when fertile, bears a cup-shaped cluster of gametangial rays at the apex. These rays include numerous cysts that are eventually shed and germinate to release motile gametes, which then conjugate and ultimately grow into new plants.

Acetabularia caliculus was originally described in 1824 based on specimens collected from Shark Bay but is now known to be widespread in warmer seas. In Western Australia, it can be found as far south as Nornalup Inlet (Walpole) on the south coast.

Photo: J. Huisman

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Western Australian Herbarium (1998–). FloraBase—the Western Australian Flora. Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions. <https://florabase.dpaw.wa.gov.au/>