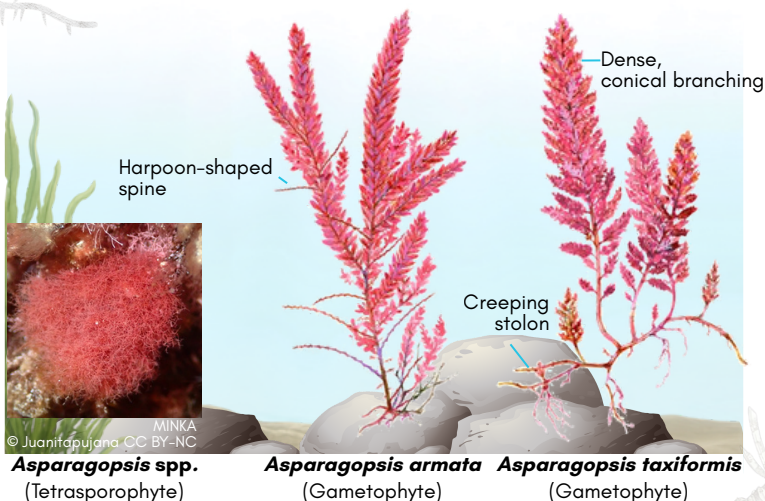
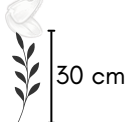


Algae

Asparagopsis - *Asparagopsis* spp.



Photoautotroph



IDENTIFICATION CRITERIA

2 morphological phases:

- **Gametophyte** (sexual phase): **Bushy** or **feather-like**, highly branched form, **pink to reddish** in color
A. armata is visually distinct from *A. taxiformis* by the presence of **harpoon-shaped spines**, **less dense branching**, and the **absence of creeping stolons**.
- **Tetrasporophyte** (asexual phase): **Pom-pom-like**, filamentous, pink to reddish clusters, 1-3 cm in diameter. The two species can only be distinguished through microscopic analysis.

ITS HISTORY

Two non-indigenous *Asparagopsis* species are present in the Mediterranean: ***Asparagopsis armata*** (native to southwest Australia) and ***Asparagopsis taxiformis*** (native to the Indo-Pacific). Their introduction into the **Mediterranean** dates back to the early **20th century**, primarily via maritime traffic and aquaculture. Both species are now well-established along the French and Spanish Mediterranean coasts.

ECOLOGICAL AND ECONOMIC IMPACTS

By forming dense mats, the genus *Asparagopsis* **competes directly** with native algae for light and substrate, **reducing their diversity** and **altering benthic communities**. Its toxic halogenated secondary metabolites **repel** marine **herbivores** and promote the **establishment** of other **non-indigenous species**, which reuse these compounds for their own defense. Despite its negative ecological impact, it is of economic interest due to its role as an **anti-methane feed additive** in livestock farming and its **bioactive properties** useful in pharmacy.

FUN FACTS

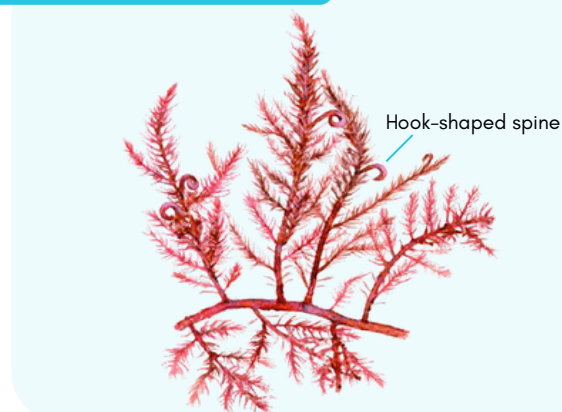
A. armata **hooks** onto **diving suits**

Can reduce **methane emissions** from ruminants by **80%**

A **fragment** regenerates an **entire alga**

SIMILAR SPECIES

Bonnemaison's Hook Weed
Bonnemaisonia hamifera



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