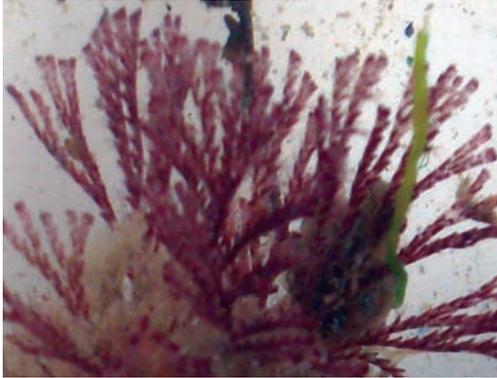


## GUIDE TO MARINE INVADERS IN THE GULF OF MAINE

# *Bugula neritina*

purple bushy bryozoan



Salem Sound Coastwatch

### PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

- A deep purple to brownish red bushy branching colonial animal
- Looks like a small clump of purple seaweed
- Each branch of the colony is made up of doubled strands of connected zooids
- Each zooid is only about 1mm in length, while the overall colony can be several centimeters across



Adriann Gittenberger

### HABITAT PREFERENCE

- Attaches to hard substrates, such as on low intertidal or subtidal rocks, and on the sides of floating dock
- Found only in marine salinity (~30-35 ppt)
- Tolerant of temperature ranges found in New England

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### INVASION STATUS & ECOLOGICAL CONCERNS

*Bugula neritina* is now found world-wide and has become a common fouling organism on floating docks around New England. So far, it is not as dominant or abundant as it has become in other portions of its non-native range, particularly around coastal New Zealand, but further study is necessary to determine its local ecological impact.

### SIMILAR SPECIES

There are a few native *Bugula* species that look like *B. neritina*. All native bryozoans are generally tan or off-white. The *B. neritina* colonial shape is more bushy than the native *Bugula turrita*, which has an overall whorled or spirally-branching appearance, or the native *Bugula simplex* that has a flattened, fan-like appearance.

Additionally, there are several species of red algae that appear similar at first glance, but none of them are comprised of clearly visible chains of individual zooids, which can be seen with the naked eye or a low-power hand magnifier. Colonies of hydroids (animals that also use very small tentacles to feed) grow in a similar manner and on similar surfaces but do not have the same pattern of zooids as do bryozoans.



Salem Sound Coastwatch

Native *Bugula turrita* (left) and Invader *Bugula neritina* (right)

This identification card is one of a series produced by Salem Sound Coastwatch highlighting introduced species that pose a threat to the marine environments of Massachusetts and the Gulf of Maine. These cards were funded by the MA Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, Office of Coastal Zone Management with funding from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. For additional information on these species, or to report sightings, please visit [www.marineID.org](http://www.marineID.org) or email [marineID@northeastANS.org](mailto:marineID@northeastANS.org).

