

BASIC KNOWLEDGE IN MARINE SCIENCES

Edited by

Normawaty Mohammd-Noor



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Introduction

Preservation of seaweed is one of the important techniques that need to be learnt by those who wish to study seaweed. According to Ahmad (1995), the first and important step need to be considered before preserving the seaweed, is the collecting of the seaweed specimens. Seaweed need to be collected as a whole specimen, not only part of it. This means that, we need to obtain a complete seaweed. If we collect only part of the seaweed, this will cause problems to the person who is going to identify the specimen and it also cannot be used for further research. Collecting of seaweed specimen is best conducted during low tides. During this period, the seaweed is easily seen and collected. Seaweed collected is placed in a net bag. But for fragile seaweed, the specimen is put in a container or a plastic bag. It is not advised to collect specimens that were brought by waves to the beach since these specimens are not fresh anymore (Ahmad, 1995).

Seaweed can be preserved in two ways. The first one is known as wet herbarium which uses formalin (5-15%) as preservative. The second way of preserving the seaweed is by drying the seaweed under the sun or in the oven and is called dried herbarium. To decide which method is better will depend on the nature of the seaweed and the objectives of a particular study. Seaweeds preserved in formalin easily loses its colour after sometime and handling formalin is tedious since it is a toxic chemical. For dried herbarium, seaweeds are normally pressed to dry them. This would make the seaweed flat and may sometimes damage its structure. For both methods, seaweeds collected need to be cleaned from sand, barnacles and other particles.