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Glossary

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Algae - Eukaryotic one-celled or multicellular plant-like organisms that lack true stems, roots and leaves. They range in size from microscopic to macroscopic. They produce their own food through photosynthesis.

Bacteria - Collective term for microorganisms with one cell and no nucleus. Bacteria reproduce through subdivision and are classified according to their shape, structure and behavior.

Coral - Though they may look like rocks or plants, coral are simple marine animals with a skeleton of calcium carbonate. They typically form colonies and may build reefs.

Fungi - A group of eukaryotic organisms that lack chlorophyll and so must obtain nutrients from dead or living organic matter. They include molds, mildews, yeasts and mushrooms.

Microorganism - A living organism that can be seen only through a microscope. Microorganisms include bacteria, fungi, protozoa and algae. Although viruses are not considered living organisms, they are sometimes classified as microorganisms.

Protozoa - Simple organisms that range in size from microscopic to macroscopic (visible to the naked eye). They are single-celled eukaryote organisms, larger and more complex than bacteria. They include amoebas and paramecia.

Sea sponge - One of the simplest of animal organisms, containing multiple cells but lacking any muscles, nerves or organs. They feed by pumping water through their matrix to filter out food particles. After being torn apart into individual cells, they can spontaneously reconstruct themselves.

Sea squirt - A group of invertebrate marine animals, known technically as tunicates. These vase-shaped sacs of tissue spend most of their life attached to rocks, docks or the undersides of boats. They're called squirts because of the way they squirt out seawater while feeding on plankton and organic material.