

PREPARATION OF THIS SYNOPSIS

The present review concerns Gelidium and Pterocladia, the two most diversified and geographically widespread genera in the Gelidiaceae. Together they comprise over one hundred species, several of which are of common occurrence in tropical and temperate waters. Many of them are conspicuous members of intertidal and subtidal communities and locally some can become dominant because of their sizes, densities, cover or biomass values. Several species constitute food for invertebrates and fishes and a few are even consumed directly by indigenous people in different areas. Over fifty of these species are industrially or domestically used in agar production. The group is therefore biologically and economically important.

Because of the widespread distribution of several species of Gelidium and Pterocladia, quantitative and qualitative information on stocks, distributional ranges, physiological limits and utilization of these species is widely scattered in the literature. Much of this information was reviewed some years ago (Santelices, 1974). The present contribution updates that review.

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ABSTRACT

This synopsis compiles and reviews the presently available information on identity, distribution, ecology, metabolism, life history, population structure, productivity, harvest and culture, management and utilization of the genera Gelidium and Pterocladia (Rhodophyta) throughout the world.