

Fun Fact Sheet: Bluebottle

Region

North Coast, Gascoyne Coast, West Coast, South Coast, Indian Ocean Territories

Summary

The Bluebottle or Portuguese man-of-war is not a single animal but a colony of four kinds of highly modified individuals (polyps).



Bluebottles can still sting even after they have been washed up on the beach, so if found they should be left alone.

Bluebottles are a colony of four kinds of highly modified individuals (polyps). The polyps are dependent on one another for survival. The individual polyps are: The float (pneumatophore) is a

single individual and supports the rest of the colony. The tentacles (dactylozooids) are polyps concerned with the detection and capture of food and convey their prey to the digestive polyps (gastrozooids). Reproduction is carried out by the gonozooids, another type of polyp.

Bluebottles diet consists mostly of small crustaceans and other members of the surface plankton, which it ensnares, in a tangle of nematocyst threads (tentacles).

For survival, the half the floats are born with a ridge on the right and half with a ridge on the left as well the float can twist slightly to the left or right, this determines which direction it will take in the wind, if it is angled to the left it will sail to the right and visa versa. This way if some are being blown ashore then others will be blown away from the shore.