

Meet the Algae

Algae are extremely diverse organisms in terms of size, colour and evolutionary origins – over 50,000 species are known to date .

Size

The smallest cells, **picophytoplankton**, are about 50x smaller than the diameter of a hair (2 μm), whereas **Giant Kelp** can be 60 m long.

Diversity



The Giant Kelp *Macrocystis pyrifera*



This is the Red alga *Porphyra*

Colour

The major groups of algae are often classified by colour – there are **Green**, **Red**, **Brown**, **Golden Brown** and even **Yellow-green brown** algae! The colour is determined by the pigments that they possess. These help algae to harvest light in different environments.

Origins

This 'Tree of Life' shows the relationships between different organisms based on their genetics.

Algae are found in several different groups, reflecting their **different origins**.

