

Littorina littorea

Invasive to Maine

Common Periwinkle

Coastal
Rocky Intertidal, Docks, and Beaches

Shell Aperture (Opening)



Vital Signs Team 28, Falmouth



Look for an aperture (opening) that is white. Hum to it! If it comes out, look for black bands on the tentacles.

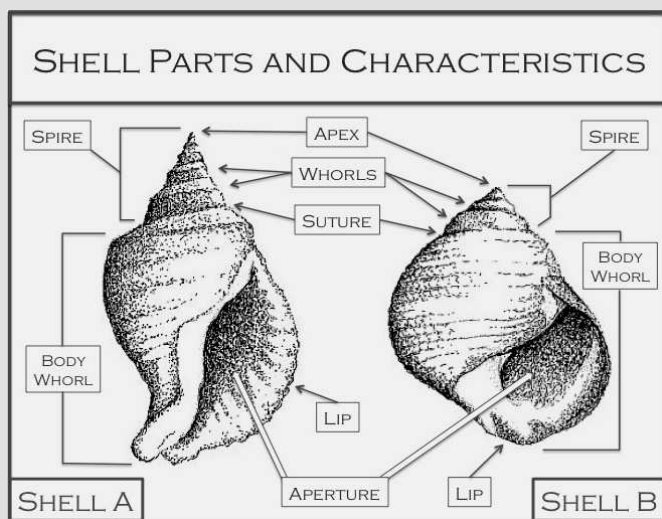
Full View



glenfinlas, www.flickr.com



Look for a periwinkle with a smooth, thick, purplish-brown shell. The spire (spiraled end) is short, like Shell B in the diagram.



Shell Spire (Spiraled End)



glenfinlas, www.flickr.com



Look for a shell with a short spire, flattened whorls, and a pointed apex (tip). Shells of young animals have marked spiral ridges while shells of older animals are smooth.

Color Variations



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The Common Periwinkle has fewer color variations than the Smooth or Rough Periwinkles. It is most often grayish-purple or a dull brown.

Similar Species

The Rough Periwinkle looks a lot like the Common Periwinkle with the following exceptions: The Rough Periwinkle has deep spiral ridges and the inside of the shell is darker than the outside. The Common Periwinkle has much less obvious ridges and the inside of the shell is lighter than the outside.

Fun Fact

Common Periwinkles can get their oxygen from water or, for a limited time, from air. Scientists think that terrestrial (land) snails may have evolved from periwinkles.

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