

Littorina littorea

Common Periwinkle

Invasive to Maine

Coastal
Rocky Intertidal, Docks, and Beaches

Shell Aperture (Opening)



Vital Signs Team 28, Falmouth Middle School



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

Full View



VS user msk_beach_fm2, Middle School of Kennebunks

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

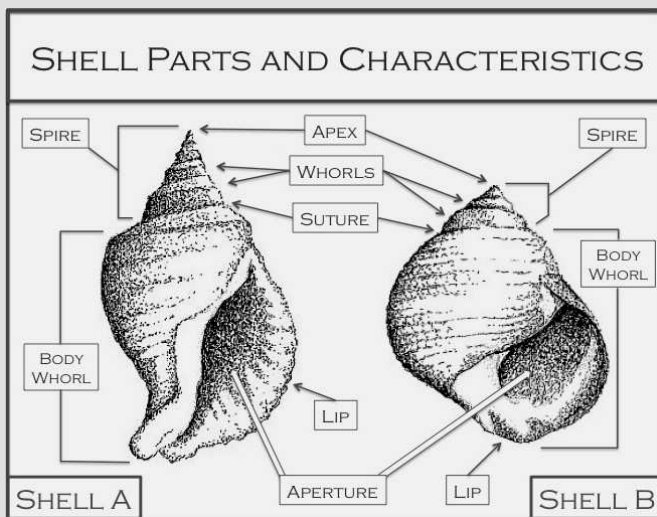
Shell Spire (Spiraled End)



VS user Uncommon Periwinkle



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



Vital Signs Team 28, Falmouth Middle School



The common periwinkle is most often grayish-purple or a dull brown. It has black, horizontal lines on the head tentacles.

Similar Species

Common and rough periwinkles look alike! Common periwinkles do not have deep, indented whorls. The common periwinkle's head tentacles have horizontal lines, and the rough's tentacles have verticle lines. The common's lip meets the whorl at a < 90 degree angle (rough = > 90 degree angle).

Did You Know?

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.



Gulf of Maine
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