



Thursday, 11 February 2022

Celebrating the United Nations International Day of Women and Girls in Science 2022

Then and now: women making waves in the science of seaweed

Since the early 1800s, when women in England first hitched up their petticoats and donned aprons, they have been growing seaweeds in their backyards. They have also been studying them, and their work has influenced generations of female scientists to take up seaweed research.

IMAS researcher, Professor Catriona Hurd, has been immersed in seaweed physiology and ecology, called phycology, across her extensive international career. And she is passing the legacy on to emerging phycologists like IMAS University of Tasmania PhD candidate Ellie Paine.

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Seaweeds are critically important to the health of coastal ecosystems, creating habitat and providing food for invertebrates like abalone and sea urchins. Most seaweeds enter the food web as primary producers.

Popular in Asian cuisine, seaweeds contain many bioactive chemicals, including anti-cancer properties. They also contain hydrocolloids, a gelling agent used across globally significant industries, from food and pharmaceuticals to cosmetics and biotechnology.

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INSPIRING THE NEXT GENERATION OF SEAWEED SCIENTISTS

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%_ # !^å^ ^ååå å å , å åå å \] [, { [!^ , • [! å] |åå { ! å ~ } åå! åå åå !^•åå&@ project studying seaweed. That was six years ago and now here I am, finishing my PhD this ^åå , ååCååå } åå { ^] ! å å ~] ! çå [! , + • @ • åå.

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%am constantly inspired by females in the traditionally male-dominated fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) . åå å | [çå åååå { || [, ð * ð @ { [•å] • [~@] ä { @åå c [ç ~ c [^