

Gastropod pedal mucus retains seaweed propagules

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Abstract

Using field and laboratory experiments, this study evaluated whether the pedal mucus of several rocky intertidal species of gastropods from central Chile retained and allowed germination of seaweed propagules. Field-exposed slides coated with mucus retained significantly greater numbers of propagules than uncoated slides, suggesting that the mucus may contribute to propagule attachment in the field. The importance of such an effect, however, would vary with immersion time of the habitat considered, the type of gastropod and the kind of seaweed involved. Comparisons between propagule abundance on uncoated and coated slides indicated that the latter could be used as a spore trapper to document rapid changes of spore abundance in the water column. In addition, coated slides retained free floating, seemingly detached, developmental stages of various kinds of seaweeds that never appeared in the uncoated slides used as controls.