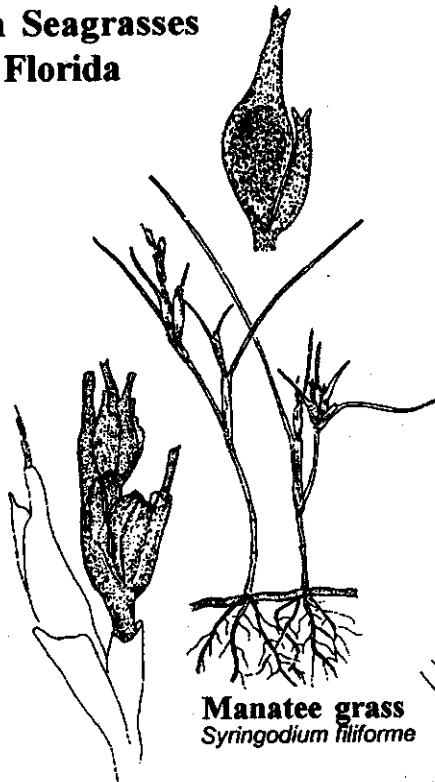


# What do manatees eat?

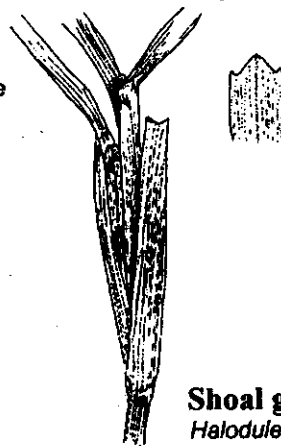
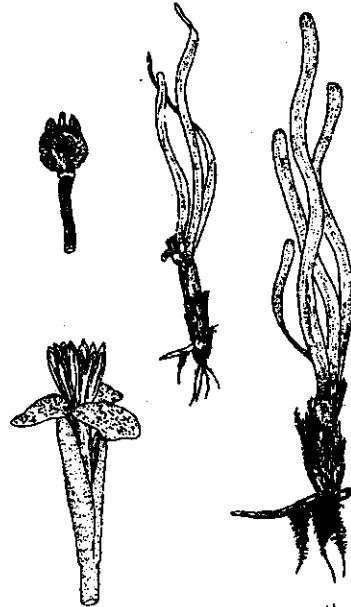
Manatees eat aquatic plants. They can consume up to 10-15% of their body weight daily and intermittently feed on the average of 8-10 hours a day. Manatees are unique in that they are the only marine mammalian herbivore in marine waters of Florida and the Caribbean. Interestingly, manatees do not appear to have any natural enemies that prey upon them. As herbivores, their main interest is locating a lush seagrass bed to graze upon. Manatees use their muscular lips to grasp and tear plants much like an elephant uses its trunk.

## Common Seagrasses found in Florida

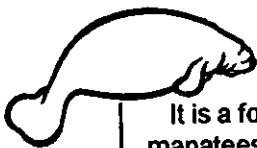


**Manatee grass**  
*Syringodium filiforme*

**Turtle grass**  
*Thalassia testudinum*



**Shoal grass**  
*Halodule wrightii*



### Manatee Note:

It is a form of harassment to feed manatees food meant for human consumption. Please do not give them lettuce, carrots or other food items. Manatees need the nutrients from natural plants found in Florida's waterways.

Look up the definitions of the following words:

Herbivore - \_\_\_\_\_

Carnivore - \_\_\_\_\_

Omnivore - \_\_\_\_\_

Why are manatees considered herbivores? \_\_\_\_\_