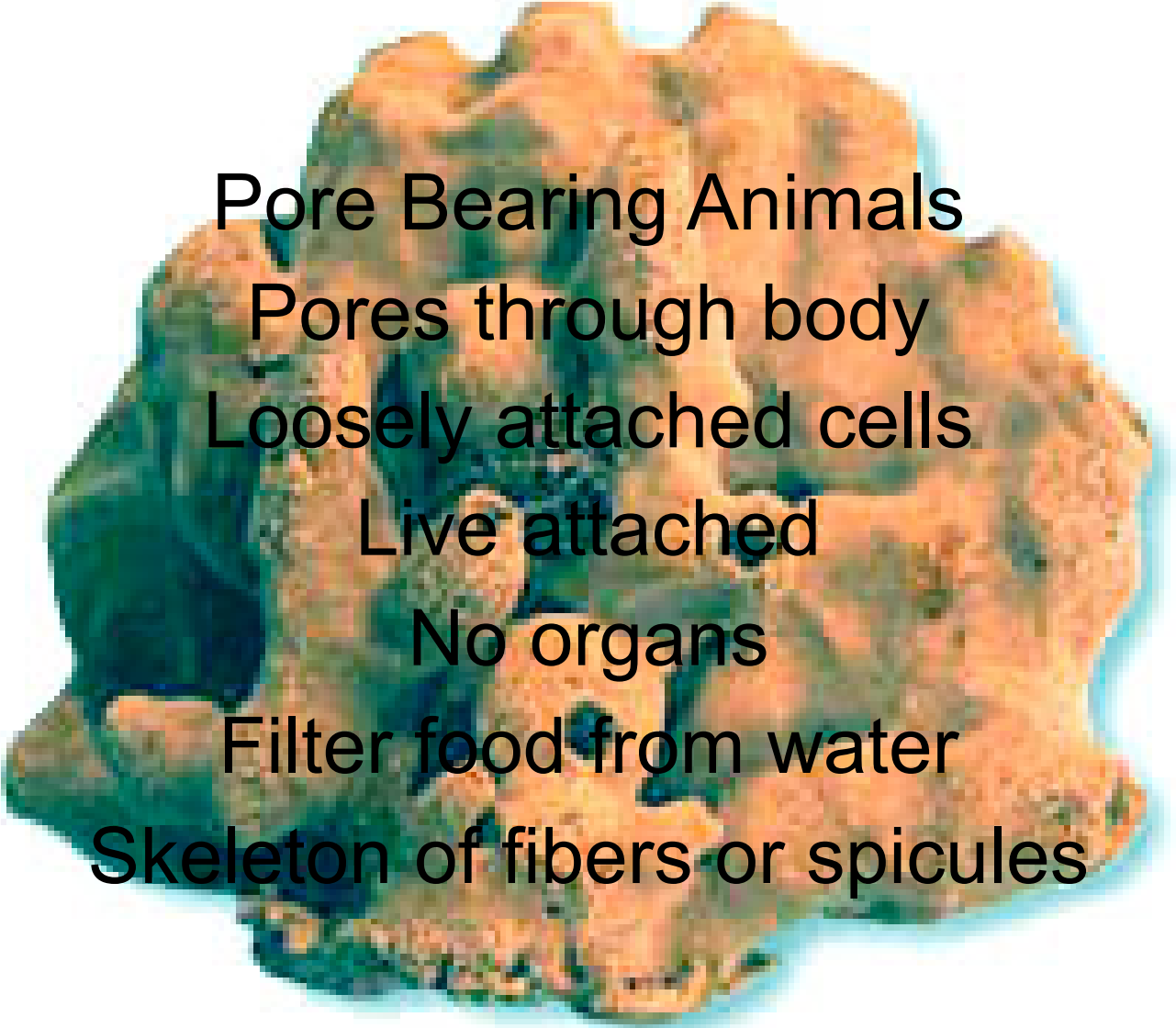


Phylum Porifera: Sponges



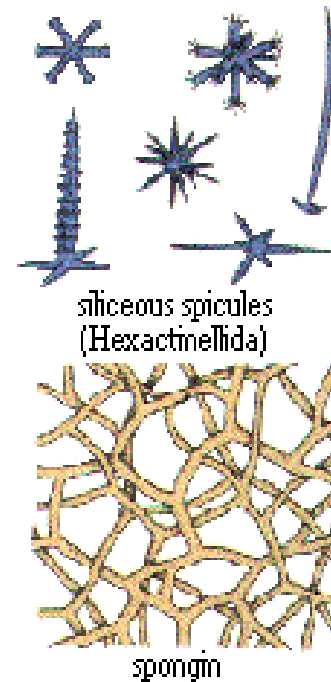
Pore Bearing Animals
Pores through body
Loosely attached cells
Live attached
No organs
Filter food from water
Skeleton of fibers or spicules



Commercial Sponge Skeletons: Fibers

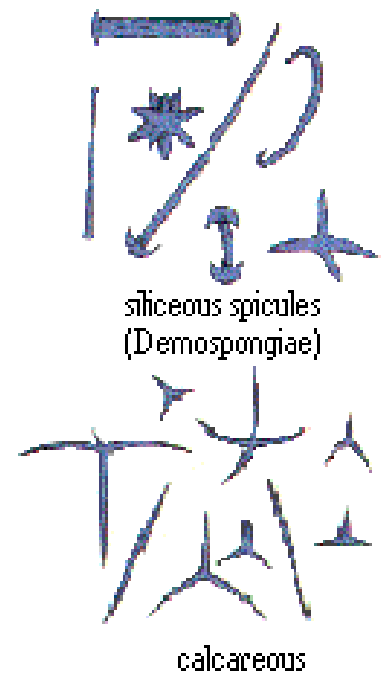
When divers bring Commercial Sponges up from the sea they are black and slimy. A long process of washing and pressing the sponges is required to break down their external membrane and tissues. When only the skeletal fibers remain, they are trimmed, dried, and often immersed in a mixture of water and hydrochloric acid. The acid gives them their blonde coloring.

Sponge Skeleton: Spicules



siliceous spicules
(Hexactinellida)

spongin



siliceous spicules
(Demospongiae)

calcareous

Sponges structure is based on microscopic interlocking **spicules** (above) which are built up from cell secretions. Depending on the species, these may take the form of pointed calcareous hooks, or flexible nets of spongin fibers.

Chok Jawa

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Sponges (Phylum Porifera)

A sponge is a simple animal made up of a few types of cells. These cells are largely independent of each other and only loosely held together. A sponge can almost be considered a colony of cells. These cells do not form organs so a sponge does not have a mouth, digestive system or circulatory system!

(Note: This page links to the internet.)