

Kid's KOrner

Other countries farm seaweed

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Not all seaweed is the slimy, smelly green stuff that gets tangled in toes and kicked aside at the beach. Far from being a nuisance, most seaweed is sought after — by the tons.

Around the world, people pay millions for it. In Japan and China, they eat it. In the Philippines, they grow it on sea farms. And most Americans can't live without it.

It's what makes ice cream stay creamy, chocolate milk stay chocolately, toothpaste squeeze out smoothly, and suntan lotion go on easily. It's in puddings and pie fillings, pet foods and air fresheners, cosmetics, shaving creams, pill coatings, and house paints.

On the New England coast, Paul Vantangoli has been raking in seaweed from the rocky bottom

every summer for 45 years.

"When I first started back in the '30s, I pulled in a few pounds and sold it to pharmaceutical companies and to breweries. It put that foamy head on beer, the kind that sticks to the glass," he recalled. "Now they've come up with a thousand uses. Not a day goes by that we don't come in contact with it."

This season Vantangoli expects to haul in a million pounds of soggy wet seaweed, the dark red variety as Irish moss. On a good day he sends out 50 to 60 small flat-bottom boats, each manned by a high school or college student or college student with a long-handled rake.

It's a steady, but small business compared with the automated harvesting off the California coast. There, large barges with reapers — like old-fashioned wheat har-

vesters — move across the Pacific cutting the tops off giant brown kelp.

One of the fastest growing plants on earth, kelp is among the largest seaweeds, reaching lengths of 200 feet. The annual harvest is often plentiful enough to supply the world's largest producer—A San Diego company—with a kelp substance that has at least 500 uses.

Although seaweed has been harvested in some parts of the world for at least 5,000 years — as a food and medicine — its widespread popularity in the last four decades is attributed to the discovery of its versatility. Powdery, sugarlike substances derived from some seaweeds combine easily and well with other chemicals to act as gelling agents,



thickeners, stabilizers, and emulsifiers.

"It started with chocolate milk," James Moss, a seaweed industry consultant, recalled. "The chocolate would always settle to the bottom. Then it was found that two seaweed substances could keep the chocolate suspended.

From there it was ice cream, toothpaste — and explosive growth."

Despite the demand for imports, there are no plans to farm seaweed here. Rather, the focus is on preserving what's there naturally

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COLOR THIS!

- | | |
|-----------------|---------------|
| 1. LIGHTER BLUE | 6. PEACH |
| 2. PINK | 7. GREEN |
| 3. YELLOW | 8. LT. BROWN |
| 4. BLUE | 9. LT. BLUE |
| 5. BROWN | 10. LT. GREEN |

THE BLUE-WINGED TEAL IS A SMALL PLUMP SPEEDY DUCK WIDELY KNOWN AND ADMIRIED BY HUNTERS. IN THE WINTER THEY FLY FARTHER SOUTH THAN ANY OTHER NORTH AMERICAN DUCK. SOME GO AS FAR AS BRAZIL AND CHILE. THEY NEST IN PONDS AND MARSHES. THE TEAL FLY IN TIGHT FLOCKS MAKING EXCELLENT TARGETS FOR HUNTERS.

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