

The Department of Maritime Services Aquaculture programs

- As a waterfront community, we have a responsibility to keep our waterways and drinking water clean and safe for the entire community and its visitors.
- The Town of Huntington has worked diligently to help improve water quality through various means.
- By establishing a sustainable oyster population and enhance marine habitat, the Town of Huntington is making strides in water quality that is getting international attention.
- To help improve water quality, we have implemented a Floating Upweller System (FLUPSY), launched a pilot program for the growth and harvesting of Sugar Kelp, growing spat-on shells to create a network of spawner sanctuaries in closed waters to protect and grow sea life.
- The Maritime Department, in conjunction with REACH (Rotary Huntington Environmental Action Coalition of Huntington) launched a Town-wide shell recycling program to serve as a substrate for future generations of oyster reef creation.
- Maritime provides local restaurants with reusable sealed buckets to fill with shells. Volunteers collect the used shells and deliver them to a staging area near Mill Dam ballfield.
- They collect the shells and deposit them at the shell curing area. The buckets are scrubbed thoroughly and returned to the restaurants.
- Once the shells have cured for 9 months to remove all pathogens, and cleared by the DEC, Cornell Cooperative Extension in Southold uses them to become substrate or host shells for oyster seedlings. They will eventually become the next spat-on-shells.

- The shell recycling program is an important step in the Town's overall oyster reef building project which purifies our water by creating thriving habitats in our bays and harbors.
- With this initiative, the Town of Huntington is now becoming a vanguard municipality, providing shell stock to other towns and cities to begin their own FLUPSY Programs.
- The Town of Huntington is now officially kelp farmers!
- In late fall of 2022, the Town of Huntington embarked on a pilot program to grow sugar kelp.
- Sugar kelp is a seaweed, native to Long Island and requires little to no effort to grow it in Long Island's bays and harbors.
- The benefit? It helps to improve water quality by removing the harmful nitrogen that causes algae blooms and is also a natural fertilizer.
- The plan for the Sugar Kelp Program, which is under the coordination of the Town of Huntington's Maritime Department, was two-fold;
 - reduce harmful nitrogen in our waterways and provide a healthier alternative for fortifying the Town's landscapes,
 - reduce the need for synthetic fertilizers at the Towns Parks and golf courses by applying the homegrown kelp.
- The sugar kelp growth time line was not only encouraging, it was amazing to watch. In a little over a month, small seedlings starting to emerge along the kelp lines. On the second visit the kelp was growing healthily from the lines. Each visit offered increasingly larger results until heaping bundles of kelp, stretching as much as 5 feet below the lines, were visible.
- As Sugar Kelp does not grow in the warmer months, once the water temperature hit 55 degrees, the first Sugar Kelp harvest took place on April 25th, in advance of boating season. The total weight of the wet kelp was 250 pounds, from only two 100-foot lines.

- Once the greenhouse is emptied from the dried kelp we will then use the greenhouse as a nursery to grow native natural pollinators for the Town.
- Once dried, the sugar Kelp is processed into powder form, bagged, and shared with eager resident gardeners, excited to try the new fertilizer out on their own plants.
- Groundskeepers at several Town parks and the two Town golf courses will use the remaining kelp to apply to the grounds as fertilizer.
- Kelp is well-known for its value as a soil amendment. It has the nitrogen, phosphorus, and potash of conventional fertilizers but, in healthier concentrations. As an organic fertilizer it releases those nutrients and a suite of micronutrients slowly into the soil.
- Sugar Kelp is known to increase soil moisture retention and stimulate root growth for a variety of plants. Kelp use could help reduce the need for synthetic fertilizers.
- Each new initiative we take ensures clean, safe, reliable drinking water for our residents and beyond.
- The Town and REACH received a Greenhouse donated by The Moore Foundation. The greenhouse will be used to dry the kelp before being ground into fertilizer with a grinder also provided by The Moore Foundation.
- **Expanding a community shellfish gardening program** started in 2020 at Quentin Sammis West Neck Beach to now include Gold Star Battalion Beach, Steers Beach and Asharoken Beach.
- **Adding a rain garden to filter stormwater runoff** with the West Neck Beach Causeway reconstruction project and at Gold Star Battalion Beach

