

# Shellfish Glossary

by Pangea Shellfish

## **Bottom**

Surface or terrain whereon oysters grow (i.e. reef, sand, rock, or silt).

## **Bottom culture**

Cultivating oysters by planting oysters loosely on the bottom during growout.

## **Brine**

The salty liquor of an oyster. "briny": of or resembling brine; salty.

## **Byssal Thread**

Strong fibers used by mussels and other bivalves to attach to surfaces. Commonly known as the "beard."

## **Cage**

Metal apparatus that holds nursery bags of oyster seed to protect from predators.

## **Cage-culture**

Cultivating oysters in cages during growout.

## ***Crassostrea gigas***

Scientific name of a Pacific oyster.

## ***Crassostrea sikamea***

Scientific name of a Kumamoto oyster.

## ***Crassostrea virginica***

Scientific name of an Eastern oyster.

## **Cull**

To select and sort oysters by quality and size.

## **Declump [mussels]**

To clean and separate mussels, either by machine or hand, into individual mussels as they naturally grow in clumps.

## **Downweller**

A water flow system usually used to set spat on microcultch.

## **Drag**

To harvest shellfish by dragging a rake and bag attached to a boat across the ocean bottom.

## **Finish**

The final taste impression of an oyster.

## **Floating culture**

Cultivating oysters in floating trays, bags, or rafts.

## **Fouling**

Planktonic or larvae that colonize the surface area of an oyster's shell. Organisms include barnacles, tunicates, and tube worms.

## **Garnish**

To decorate or adorn an oyster with other ingredients.

## **Grade**

To class or sort oysters dependent on size, shape, and quality.

## **Growout**

The time in which the oyster grows from seed to market size.

## **Hatchery**

A facility that spawns and fertilizes oysters to produce oyster seed.

## **Hinge**

Point where a bivalve's shells are joined.

## **Hyperphagia**

Period of time when animals eat excessively to prepare for winter dormancy.

## **Liquor**

The liquid in an oyster.

## **Longline**

A long cable anchored into the ocean bottom that bags or equipment can attach to.

## **Merroir**

An oyster's characteristic taste and flavor imparted by its environment. Similar to the "terroir" of wine.

## **Microcultch**

Very fine piece of oyster shell that oyster larvae settle on in a hatchery.

## **Mignonette**

A traditional sauce served with oysters usually made with red wine or sherry vinegar, crushed black peppercorns, and minced shallot.

## **Mud blister**

Black areas or mud pockets along the inside perimeter of an oyster's shell; caused by *Polydora websteri*.

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## **Negative tide**

An unusually low tide that exposes the ocean bottom.

## **Nursery**

A filter-feed system that protects and nourishes baby oysters to a healthy size.

## **Off-bottom culture**

Cultivating oysters via methods that keep oysters off the bottom.

## ***Ostrea edulis***

Scientific name of a Belon oyster.

## **Phytoplankton**

Plankton consisting of microscopic plants that oysters feed on.

## **Plant**

To place shellfish on the ocean bottom.

## **Purge**

To remove grit or clean shellfish by soaking in water to filter through.

## **Rack-and-bag culture**

Cultivating oysters in bags that sit on racks.

## **Rake**

Harvest oysters by using a shellfish rake.

## **Select**

Highest grade of oysters.

## **Sieve**

Sort oysters with mesh screens.

## **Spat**

Baby oysters after they have set or attached to a growing surface.

## **Spawn**

The release of shellfish eggs and sperm into the water column. Shellfish tend to be weakest after spawning.

## **Standard**

The lowest grade of market size oysters. Size and oyster shape may vary.

## **Surface-culture**

See “floating culture.”

## **Suspended culture**

Cultivating oysters in suspended trays, bags, or rafts. Oysters do not touch the ocean bottom or float at the surface.

## **Tray-culture**

Cultivating oysters in oyster trays.

## **Tumble**

Promote uniform and strong shell growth by chiseling its shell in a tumbler. See video [here](#).

## **Upweller**

A water flow system that pushes nutrient rich water up through the nursery or silos to feed oyster seed. Can be an open or closed system.

## **Vibrio**

Naturally occurring bacteria in the ocean that can contaminate oysters and cause foodborne illnesses when consumed in high concentrations.

## **Wild set**

Wild oysters naturally set on ocean bottom or spat collectors.