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Giant bladder kelp, Macrocystis pyrifera. Marine plants and animals, as well as other organisms that encounter water stress, utilize a small number of organic molecules as the dominant intracellular osmotic agents ("osmo-lytes"). Polyhydric alcohols, amino acids and their derivatives, urea, and methylamines are the major osmo-lytes in virtually all water-stressed species except the halophilic bacteria. The selective advantages of these organic osmolyte systems include the establishment of a cellular microenvironment compatible with macromolecular structure and function. See page 1234. [Craig Cary, Scripps Institution of Oceanography, La Jolla, California 92037]
Editor's Summary

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