



# Seagrass.....it's alive!

**B**iscayne Bay includes a vast meadow of flowering plants that live underwater called seagrass. Seagrass cover 64 percent of the bay bottom and includes four different varieties known as Turtle grass shown above (*Thalassia testudinum*), Manatee grass (*Syringodium filiforme*), Shoal grass (*Halodule wrightii*), and Johnson's grass, an endangered species (*Halophila johnsonii*). Seagrass offers protection, shelter, and food to a variety of marine creatures. Shrimp, stone crabs, spiny lobsters, and small juvenile fish use the seagrass as a nursery to feed and grow.

Seagrasses help to improve water quality in Biscayne Bay by trapping sediments and absorbing nutrients from land run-off. Boaters in the bay must avoid grounding their vessels on seagrass habitats. This destroys the root system and poses a serious threat to the animals that rely on the seagrass for food and shelter. The rule of thumb boaters can remember is "Blue blue, sail on through, Green green, nice and clean, Brown brown, run aground!"

