



Smithsonian
Marine Station Fort Pierce

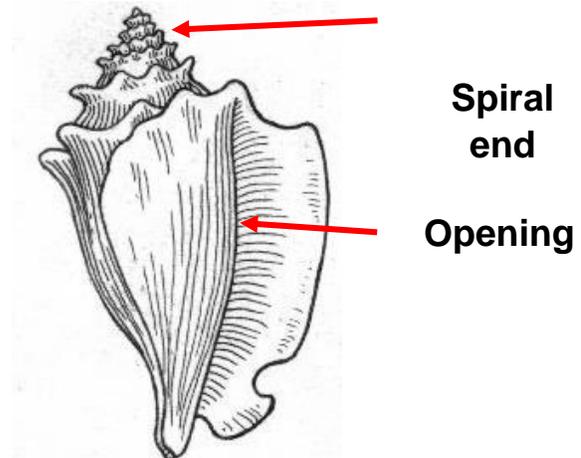
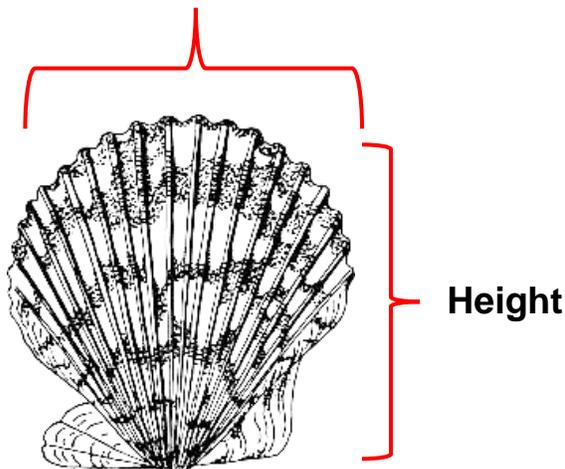
Dichotomous Key Activity

Imagine you went beach combing this morning. You found five types of shells and two seed-like items that you need to identify for your collection.

Identify the collection of items using the dichotomous key below and the photo key worksheet, where you will also be able to record your answers, on the next page. Use your observational skills!

1a.	Is this a round bean-like shape?	Yes: Go to 2a No: Go to 1b
1b.	Is this a seashell?	Yes: Go to 3 No: Go to 2a
2a.	Does it have a gray or light grey coloration?	Yes: Nickernut bean No: Go to 2b
2b.	Does it have a light brown coloration with black stripe around center?	Yes: Brown hamburger bean No: Start over and observe more closely
3a.	Is this a flattened shell that appears to have been hinged to another shell, enclosing the animal in the center (bivalve shell)?	Yes: Go to 4a No: Go to 3b
3b.	Is this a spiral shell with one closed end and an opening on the other end (gastropod shell)?	Yes: Go to 5a No: Go to 4a
4a.	Is the shell thin and longer (horizontally) than it is tall (top to bottom)?	Yes: Stout tagelus No: Go to 4b
4b.	Is the shell thick, and is as long (horizontally) and as it is tall (top to bottom) at its widest points?	Yes: Bittersweet clam No: Go to 5a
5a.	Does the shell come to a prominent point at the spiral end?	Yes: Go to 6 No: Go to 5b
5b.	Does the shell <i>not</i> come to a prominent point at the spiral end?	Yes: Moon snail No: Go to 6a
6a.	Does the shell appear shiny and smooth to the touch?	Yes: Olive Shell No: Go to 6b
6b.	Does the shell appear opaque and looks rough to the touch?	Yes: Top snail No: Start over and observe more closely

Length (horizontal)

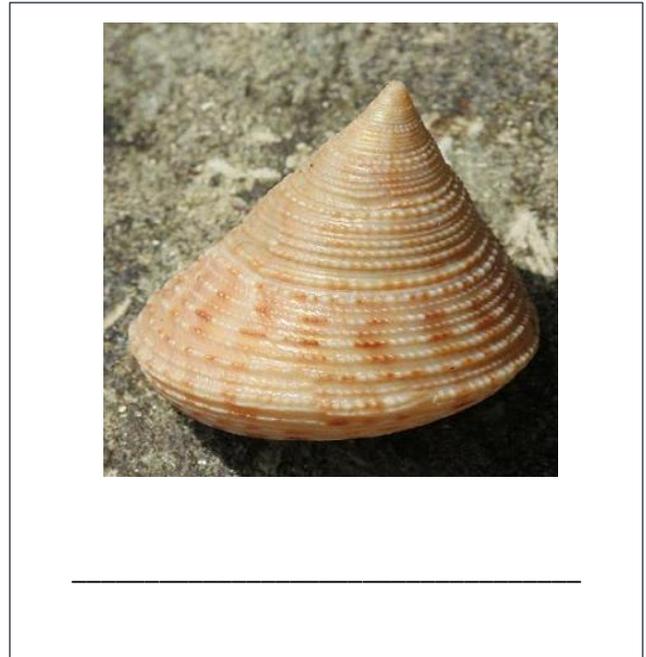
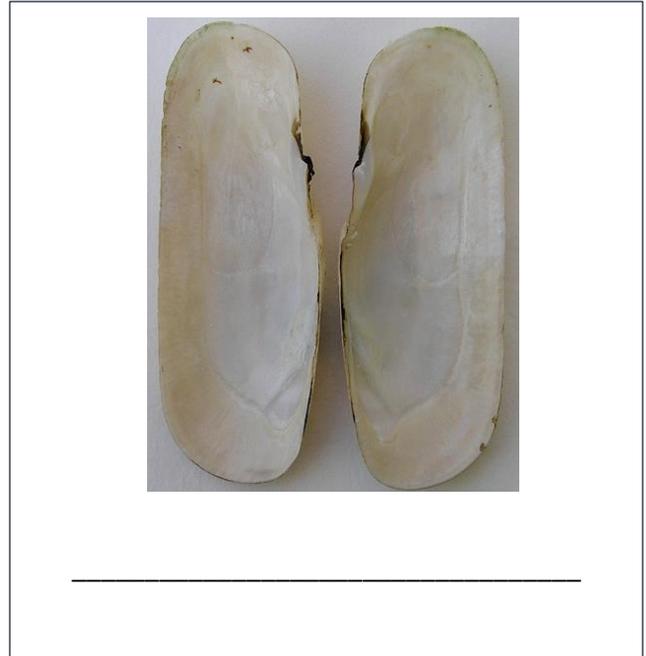
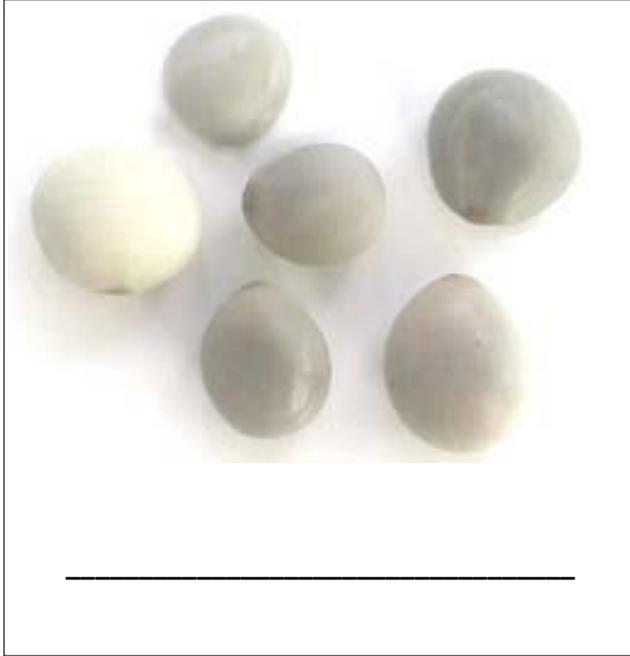




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Photo Key Worksheet

Use the pictures below to identify the shells and sea beans with the dichotomous key. Once you have identified the name of the shell or sea bean, write it below the correct picture.



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