Genus AIPTASIOGETON Schmidt, 1972

Aiptasiidae with smooth tentacles never bearing annular ridges or hollow vesicles. Cinclides restricted to a zone in the middle of the column. Zooxanthellae absent.

Type-species: *A. pellucidus*.

Aiptasiogeton pellucidus (Hollard)

(Fig. 5F, 45A, B)

Actinia pellucida Hollard, 1848 p. 6 (see Williams, in preparation)
Paractis comatus Andres, 1881 p. 314
Aiptasia lacerata: Andres, 1883 p. 159 (not *Actinia lacerata* Dalyell, 1848 p. 228)
Aiptasiogeton comatus: Schmidt, 1972 p. 26; Manuel, 1979 p. 394

Base lightly adherent, a little wider than the column, the limbus not sharply defined. Column tall, slender and much narrower than the disc in fullest extension but more usually of the proportions shown in Fig. 45. Texture of column soft and delicate, translucent, with the mesenteric insertions clearly visible. Cinclides few, usually about 10–30, located in a narrow zone in the middle of the column and easily visible as definite tiny apertures when the anemone is well extended. Acontia are emitted only with reluctance. Disc flattish, with fairly prominent lips around the mouth. Tentacles moderate to long, slender, up to about 100; hexamerously or irregularly arranged. When disturbed the column contracts sharply and the tentacles are slightly withdrawn, but they are rarely fully retracted. Diameter of base seldom exceeds 10 mm, height rarely more than 20 mm.

Two well-marked colour varieties of this species are known, these are sufficiently distinct to warrant varietal status.

Var. *pellucidus*: Column translucent white, occasionally fawn, the mesenteric insertions forming opaque longitudinal lines. Disc colourless and transparent, lips and actinopharynx whitish. Tentacles rose-pink or magenta, translucent in full extension.

Var. *comatus*: Column translucent, whitish below shading to orange-pink above, often with irregular white streaks, mesenteric insertions forming opaque longitudinal lines. Disc translucent, colourless or tinted with orange, usually blotched with opaque white on and around the lips and occasionally with small dark markings at the bases of the inner tentacles; actinopharynx pale orange. Tentacles translucent in extension, whitish at the base, shading to orange-pink on the outer two-thirds, often becoming magenta at the tips. Outer tentacles often faintly banded with white.

Nematocysts of acontia: p-mastigophores (normal aiptasiid type) 47–68 × 5·0–9·5 μm, *b*-mastigophores (see Fig. 5F) 21–39 × 1·0–2·5 μm. A second type of *p*-mastigophore frequently occurs in the acontia, these are different in structure from the normal aiptasiid type and measure 23–30 × 3·5–4·0 μm. At present it is uncertain whether these are of regular occurrence in the acontia or contaminants from other tissues; if the former case is true then these nematocysts must be regarded as a further generic character.

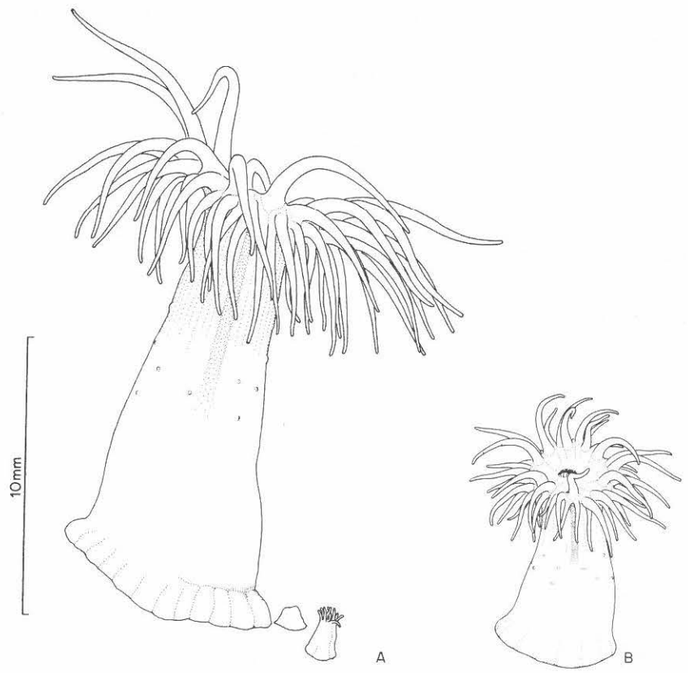

FIG. 45. *Aiptasiogeton pellicidus*. A, B, Two adults, neither fully expanded; note the tiny basal lacerations, one of which has started to develop tentacles.

Reproduction: This species habitually reproduces very freely by basal laceration with the consequence that its base is usually ragged in outline. Some British specimens have also been observed to produce young by viviparity; these young were very small in comparison with those of other viviparous species, only about 1 mm across the base. Viviparity has not been reported in other parts of the species' range.

Habitat: Attached to rocks, in holes and crevices, usually in shaded places. Occurs on the lower shore and in shallow water down to about 5 m depth.