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Look Beyond the Shell

Due to the oyster's unattractive exterior, not many people bother to think much about them. Though, if you look a little closer, the oyster is one of the most fascinating creatures in existence. I have never really known why people love oysters so much, but after thinking on it for a while, I believe I know. There's just something so pleasing about the oysters' rough, gray and tan barnacle-covered outside. It feels almost like sandpaper, yet there is a certain element about it that shows that it is part of the sea. The interior, in a stark contrast to the outside, is cream and soft. It's as if it's covered in a thin layer of silk. The differences in the textures and looks of the exterior and interior of the oyster can reflect the variety of ways that they are used.

For years, oysters have supplied people near the water with food and other necessities. People enjoy this meat cooked in more ways than you could ever imagine, and there are great health benefits that can come from eating them. While I can't speak for the flavor myself, people like oysters steamed, roasted, fried, and more. They are known to increase tissue repair and growth, lower cholesterol levels, and reduce blood pressure. Oysters were also fashioned into tools that were used in the everyday lives of the natives. American Indians used the shells to carve out the insides of canoes and to scrape the fur off of animal skins. Their shells could be sharpened and used as weapons, such as knives, spearheads, and arrowheads.

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In addition to practical purposes such as food and tools, oyster shells can be used for crafts, landscaping, and decorations. In my opinion, oyster shells are an amazing way to bring an ocean-like feeling to your house. Oyster shells can be placed in around your home to catch roof runoff and prevent erosion. They can be used along the waterfront for coastal homes to prevent shoreline erosion. Oysters can also make wonderful additions to wreaths, baskets, jewelry and more. Partially formed pearls attached to the inside of shells can be put on display. Fully formed pearls are mostly used in jewelry but you might be able to harvest a few to put in crafts or make decorations with.

Gathered from traps in deep water or harvested from the shallow waters near the shore, there are many types of oysters and their taste and appearance are as varied as their uses. Some of these types are Eastern oysters, European flat oysters, Olympia oysters, and Pacific oysters. Eastern oysters are said to taste like the salty sea and have beautiful ring-like formations on their oval shaped shells. European flat oysters are supposed to be salty with a metallic aftertaste. They have a round shell with ring-like formations, as if the waves have worn down their shells over the years. Olympia oysters have a bright, earthy, coppery flavor and are significantly smaller than most other species of oysters. Finally, we have Pacific Oysters. Pacific oysters have a sweet and buttery flavor. In my opinion, their shells are the most fascinating of all, with perfect ridges and an oval shape.

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While the appearances and uses of oysters after they're harvested may vary, oysters are also very important to underwater ecosystems. They provide food for many animals and can filter anything unwanted out of the water, keeping their environment clean. Oysters can create a place known as an oyster reef. Oyster reefs provide shelter and a spawning area for many bay residents. The nooks and crannies of the reef formation are home to many species of worms, mollusks, fish, and mud crabs. The presence of these organisms attracts predators, which in turn, attracts even larger predators. Oysters have been, and will continue to be, a very important part of the underwater ecosystem.

When the word 'oyster' is said many people think of it as food, but there are many other uses. Even though its outside isn't very appealing, its inside is intricate and useful. As you can see, based on the information that I have given, oysters are very helpful and fascinating characters. Thank you for considering the oyster.