SAILOR’S eyeball (Valonia ventricosa) or green shiny bubble algae, one of the biggest single celled unicellular organisms, are located in tropical and sub-tropical seas. The algae are usually associated with coral rubble and coral reefs and have a spherical to oval shape surface, looking like a precious gemstone. It is mainly found in groups or in giant single cell structures. The algae spreads all over the western central Atlantic and Pacific oceans.

The algae easily grow to 4 cm in diameter. Sometimes they are found living in small clumps; the young ones are translucent green in colour. The older ones are covered or decorated with a hard surface layer of algae. The Sailor’s eyeball is considered one of the largest organisms where many multicellular life forms live.

Valonia ventricosa has multiple nuclei, chloroplast and large central vacuoles. The cells usually look green but when they reflect light they appear black or silver in colour. The different colour of the algae is determined by the quantity of chloroplast of the specimen. When the cells are clean they shine like smooth glass. The thallus is made up of multinucleate thin walled cells having a diameter of 4 cm and reaching up to 5 cm in rare cases.

The parent cell reproduces in the form of segregative cell division where multinucleate mother cells make
daughter cells. The rhizoids (individual) form a new type of bubble structures and then separate from the mother cell. The cell looks like a balloon full of organelles.

The cells are unique because they are unusually large in shape and size. Due to their larger size we can easily study the different types of transfer of water and water soluble material across these biological membranes.

**Interesting Facts**

- The algae are unique because the cell wall takes its own shape.
- The cells multiply very fast.
- If the cells grow in fish tanks, they absorb all the oxygen and kill the fishes.

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