



When cooked the glossy shell of the sunray venus clam changes to an attractive peach to orange coloration.

SENSORY PROFILE

THE TRAINED SEAFOOD SENSORY PANELISTS at the University of Florida's Aquatic Food Products Lab conducted a sensory evaluation of the sunray venus clam to describe, or profile, the characteristics of this new aquacultured clam. An extremely attractive external feature is the peach to orange color tones and radiating pattern of

the glossy-smooth shell. The grayish-brownish tones of the uncooked shell turn these colors when heated. The cooked shell should be very appealing to consumers and can be used in attractive plate presentations or displays.

The edible meat is lighter in color, varying from white, cream or light yellow. The attractive meat colors could

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At harvest the shell of the sunray venus clam is grayish-brown in coloration.



The UF Aquatic Food Products Lab evaluates a variety of seafood, such as the hard clam above.

Sensory Profile for the Meat of Sunray Venus Clams

Appearance	Very plump, fully covered clams, predominantly light color meat
Aroma	Moderate briny and metallic aroma
Basic Flavors	Salty, with moderate umami
Flavors and Aftertaste	Seaweed was the predominant flavor accompanied by strong metallic
Textures	Firm texture

also be used in marketing efforts to embellish the product. The plumpness and volume (i.e., an almost full half-shell) of the meat can be used to distinguish the sunray venus clam since the ratings were very high for these two attributes.

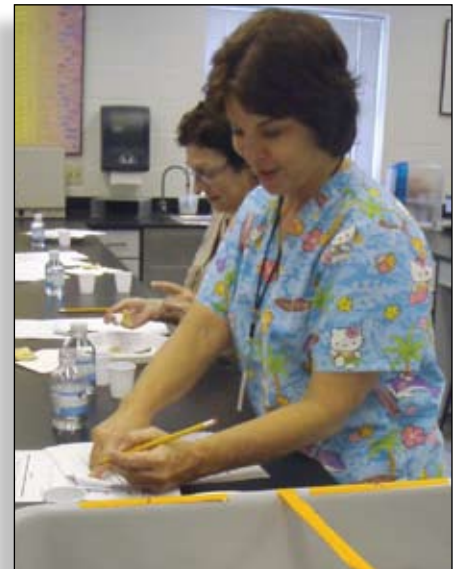
In terms of taste, ratings for “salty” were a very distinguishing attribute. This result is not unexpected since clams are filter-feeders and this clam is cultured in high salinity waters. The salty flavor would not necessarily distinguish clams from a region, but could reflect seasons and local weather conditions.

Also, there is an interesting range in the ratings for umami basic taste,

which has not been previously described for hard clams. Umami is a term borrowed from the Japanese, meaning “good flavor” or “good taste.” Scientists describe this basic taste as brothy, meaty, or savory. This could be another attractive term used in marketing to describe the sunray venus clam.

In addition, the sunray venus clam has a distinguishable seaweed and metallic-like flavor, similar to chicken liver, and the light meat texture is very firm.

Presence of sand or grittiness in any clam is an unpleasant and negative mouth-feel. During this study, there was no detection of “grit” in samples of sunray venus clams tested.



The meat of the sunray venus clam is evaluated for various attributes by an expert taste panel.



THIS COMPONENT OF AN INTEGRATED RESEARCH AND EXTENSION PROJECT EVALUATING THE SENSORY PROFILE OF THE SUNRAY VENUS CLAM WAS CONDUCTED BY STEVE OTWELL AND LAURA GARRIDO AT THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA, FOOD SCIENCE AND HUMAN NUTRITION DEPARTMENT, WITH FUNDING FROM THE FLORIDA SEA GRANT COLLEGE PROGRAM.