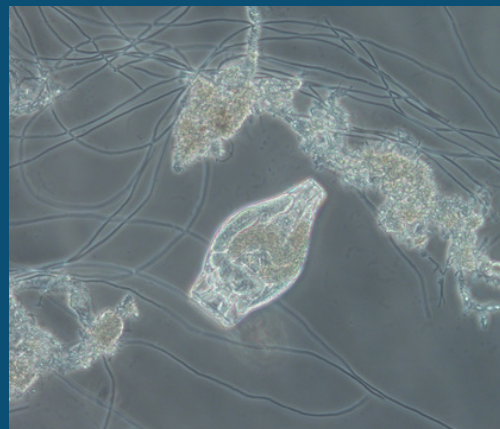


WASTEWATER BUG SPOTLIGHT

ROTIFER

Rotifers are the most common macro-invertebrate found in the environment, with nearly 2,000 known species occupying both fresh and marine waters. Rotifers range in size from 40 to 500 μm . For context, the thickness of a dime is a whopping 1,350 μm ! The head of the rotifer contains a crown of small hairs called cilia which allows the rotifer to propel food into its mouth. Under the microscope, these cilia resemble a spinning wheel which is where rotifers got their name, "rota" is Latin for wheel. Rotifers are also often seen with a two-toed foot which they use as a grappling hook to move around their environment.

Rotifers are an important organism in the wastewater treatment process at El Estero Water Resource Center. They graze on suspended particles, bacteria, algae and decomposing organic matter in wastewater, which contributes to a much cleaner effluent. Rotifers are also excellent indicator organisms that allow observers to make educated assumptions about the surrounding environment. The presence of rotifers can often indicate desirable oxygen levels, low toxicity, and low amounts of suspended solids in effluent.



Rotifers found under the microscope at the City's El Estero Water Resource Center, magnified x200



El Estero
WATER RESOURCE CENTER

For more information on
wastewater treatment visit
www.SantaBarbaraCA.gov/ElEstero