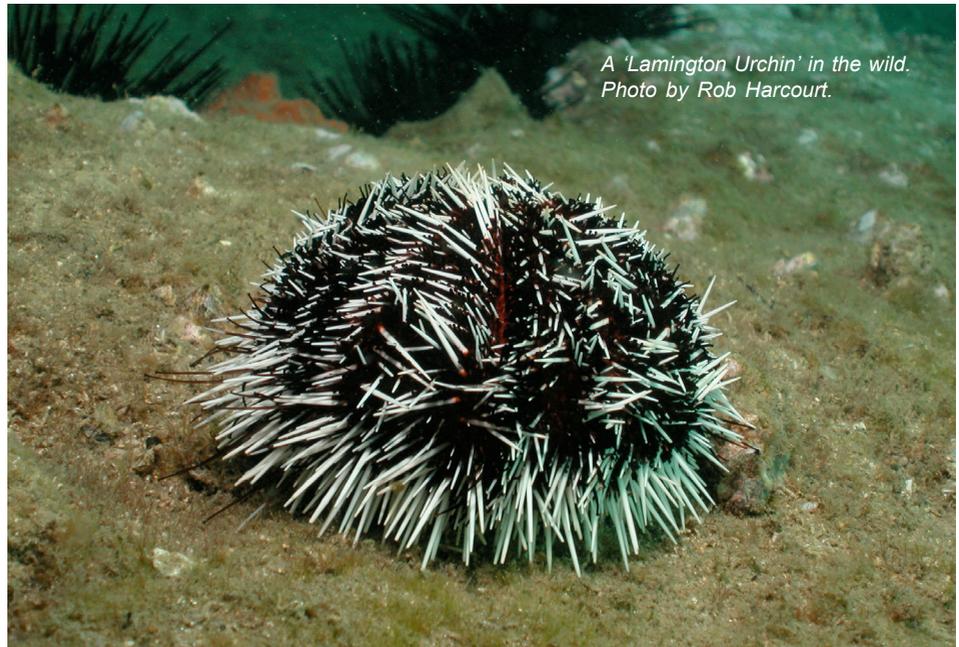


## Aussies to sell 'lamingtons' to Japan

It might sound like selling coals to Newcastle, but Australia could soon be exporting sea urchins to Japan thanks to the ingenuity of two Macquarie University scientists.

Dr Jane Williamson and Dr Devarajen Vaitilingon began work on Australia's first ever ecologically sustainable aquaculture system for the production of sea urchin roe in 2004. With total funding of more than \$800,000 from AusIndustry and a commercial partner, their first goal was to determine the best species of sea urchin to farm.

After looking at a range of different species being fed various diets they settled on *Tripneustes gratilla*, known to Australians as the 'Lamington Urchin' because of its black body and white spines and known to the Japanese – who consume 80 per cent of the world's sea urchin roe - as the delectable 'white Uni'.



A 'Lamington Urchin' in the wild.  
Photo by Rob Harcourt.

During the next year the scientists will follow the sea urchins from gametes and larvae through to maturity and harvest their first roe.

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