

Cambrian Fact File

***Vauxia* (sponge)**

Vauxia is considered to be quite advanced for this age; it had a branched body and its skeleton included strands of spongin that allowed it some flexibility as well. We know spongin today – it is what the ‘natural sponges’ we use in the bath are made from.

***Vauxia* in more detail**

As any other sponge, *Vauxia* was a colony of cells living together in a silica skeleton and filtering tiny particles of food, bacteria and algae from the water it drew through its ‘body’. This sponge has a complex system of tiny chambers inside the walls of its body that increased the surface area available for absorbing food. Some cells in these chambers created currents in the water to keep it moving by beating their cilia while others swallowed food particles as they went past. Because *Vauxia* has such an efficient system for getting food, it was able to grow to quite a size; some fossils that have been found also seem to show growth rings like a tree, so *Vauxia* may have been long-lived as well. The branches were not just there to increase its gut, but may also have been able to grow into new individuals if broken off by animals or rough seas. Certainly some rocks have been found that show lots of *Vauxia* living closely to one another, forming a sponge forest.

See also: **Sponges**
 Eiffelia