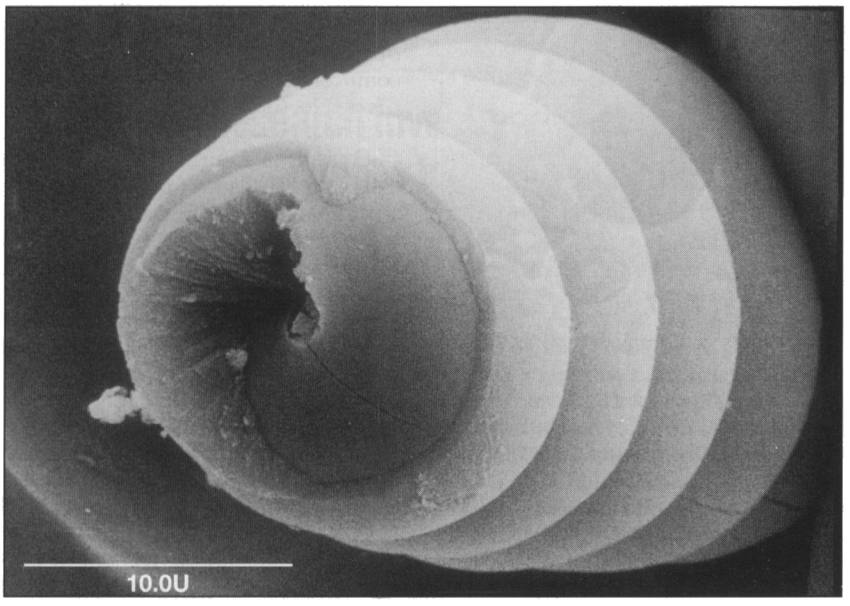
Figures appearing in EDITOR'S CHOICE *are those arising from materials research which strike the editor's fancy as being aesthetically appealing and eye-catching. No further criteria are applied and none should be assumed. When taken out of context, such figures often evoke images beyond and unrelated to the original meaning. Submissions of candidate figures are welcome and should include a complete source citation, a photocopy of the report in which it appears (or will appear), and a reproduction-quality original drawing or photograph of the figure in question.*



A carpenter's wood screw, no doubt. The tapered helix, at roughly two thousand threads per inch, would make a fine screw indeed. This month's EDITOR'S CHOICE image, by an interesting twist of fate, might well be of a fastener, but one for use only by the Divine Carpenter. It is made entirely of convoluted calcium carbonate, but unlike the calcite phase of lowly limestone and majestic marble, it is composed of spherulites of the metastable polymorph, vaterite. The divine part stems from its pattern being the result of growth mediation by charged polypeptides, in this case poly(aspartate), a close cousin of the well-known artificial sweetener. The process mimics that of biomineralization, fundamental to our bones and other components of the mortal coil. The "creators," L.A. Gower and D.A. Tirrell (*J. Crystal Growth* **191** [1998] p. 153), showed how a minute quantity of the organic inhibits crystal growth of the usual rhombohedral calcite and instead causes an ordered hydrated carbonate membrane to form that acts as a template for the episodic helicoidal outgrowths from vaterite aggregates. It appears that this field of research is moving much faster than a snail's pace toward explaining the spirality of, among other species, the snail.