



CORAL

CLASS ANTHAZOA

DID YOU KNOW?

Coral have inbuilt sunscreen to stop them from getting burnt!

WHERE AT AQWA?

You'll find living coral throughout our exhibits. AQWA is considered a world leader when it comes to the care and growth of living coral! Visit today to discover the diversity of coral found along our coast.

SIZE (POLYP): 1-12CM

DIET: SUGARS AND PLANKTON

MAIN PREDATOR: PARROTFISH, CRABS BUTTERFLY FISH, WORMS

HABITAT (HARD CORAL) WARM, CLEAR, SHALLOW WATERS

FOUND: ALL OCEANS

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Coral comes from a word meaning red. It was first used to describe the red coral of the Mediterranean.

ANIMALS-NOT PLANTS!

Believe it or not, corals are animals like jellyfish and anemones. Corals are made up of hundreds of tiny animals, called polyps, all living together in a colony. Polyps look a bit like an upside-down jellyfish, with a cup-like body and tentacles. Their tentacles contain stinging cells that help them catch food and protect their border.

REEF BUILDERS

Coral reefs are formed by the most common type of coral; hard coral. Hard corals use sea water to create a limestone skeleton. As the colony grows, so too does its skeleton, and the coral reef.

INDOOR PLANTS

Hard corals get energy to build reefs from tiny plants living inside their cells. These plants, called zooxanthellae, use sunlight to make the food.

SPLIT OR SPAWN?

Coral polyps can reproduce in two ways; by dividing in two or by a process called 'spawning'. Once a year, millions of sperm and eggs are released at the same time. New polyps are formed which then settle on the reef to build new coral colonies.

ON THE SOFTER SIDE

Not all corals are hard. Soft corals lack the hard limestone skeleton of hard corals and are instead supported by calcium rods called sclerites.