ISSUE
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2009

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FOR MAAST MEMBERS

THE MAASTARD

A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

Reefers,

Welcome to another addition of The MAASTARD NEWSLETTER. This last month has been a very eventful one . There have been lots of talk about reefing, new members and new reef tanks going up. I am proud to see unity in all our members working to help each other. It's a great sight! Working together shows our dedication and love for this hobby.

On another note, the MAAST Library is now open for Charter Members to use for reference material as well as books and equipment.

In the event that you would like submit information for upcoming newsletters please feel free to contact (Allan) or myself (Pennies2Cents) via PM on the Maast website.

- Eve -

Ping– September Picture of The Month Winner

this issue

Water Quality Part 1.

Source Water and Making Synthetic Seawater

Peter Kordelski

This is the first of a series of articles on water quality to be presented in the MAAST newsletter over the next few months. Water quality is all about clarity and the ability of your marine aquarium system to enable its inhabitants to thrive, not just survive. We will begin this month by discussing where water quality begins, the freshwater source or source water and end with a look at making synthetic seawater. This may seem rudimentary to some, but this is a necessary step in our journey into a deeper understanding of saltwater chemistry and some of the tools available to help us maintain as close to natural seawater values and ionic balance as possible.

To understand how to maintain ionic balance we will start with an explanation of Total dissolved Solids (TDS). Basically, TDS is a measurement of how clean our water is, measured in mg/l or amount of particulate matter per liter. U.S. drinking standards allow up to 500 mg/l, but this is much too high of a quantity of particulate matter for those of us wishing to raise corals and/or not constantly fighting nuisance algae.

New Elected Board of Director & Appointed Officer:

We would like to welcome our newest member of the Board of Directors: Bill Streep (BStreep).

Congrats to our newest Officer Eve Vialpando (Pennies2Cents) who has been appointed Secretary.

We look forward to working with you in the near future in making MAAST a place to enjoy.

The MAAST BOD

October Birthdays

- Boogaman
- Kkeil02
- Andrew
- DBlackman
- Txav8r
- Pennies2Cents
- ScorpiNo
- Jpond83
- Danielcherian
- Henry

Continued from front page

It is a general rule that the water entering our systems should have a TDS of ten or less. Many of us prefer a TDS count of lower than ten, but ten is an easy number to remember when we are testing our source water. The point is that we must TEST, TEST, TEST.

If something is going into your system it must be tested for, starting with the source water. A high quality TDS meter is a mandatory piece of equipment we all need to invest in. What is the TDS of your source water and when was the last time the filters were changed where you purchase your source water? To help us ensure quality source water, the next piece of equipment we need to invest in is a Reverse Osmosis Deionizing water filter (RO/DI).

An excellent source of information on these units can be found on one of our sponsor's web page under FAQ http://www.buckeyefieldsupply.com/FAQ.asp. Buckeye's site does a good job of explaining how these units work, when and why to change out parts of an RO/DI system and good background information on RO/DI. Now that you have source water with a low TDS, it is time to make some synthetic seawater. Source water should be aerated before the synthetic salt mix is added in order to maintain not lower the alkalinity.

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One of the best ways to do this is to run an appropriately sized power head in the mixing bucket for a few hours to overnight. Appropriate is large enough to move the water just below a rate that causes the water to splash out of the mixing bucket. A Maxi-Jet 1200 works very well in a five gallon bucket, but a much larger pump is needed with a garbage can full of water. This aeration will drive off the CO2 and ensure you do not lose some, if not most of the salt mixes buffering capabilities when the salt is added to the source water.

The amount of salt to add generally is one half cup of synthetic salt mix per gallon of source water. In order for this solution to reach saturation, it should be mixed with the power head or pump for anywhere from eight to twenty four hours. Note: remember top-off water is not salted. How often do we ask a newbie with a problem posted on the forums what their salinity is? Finally check the salinity of the newly mixed water. The normal range of SG for most tanks is from 1.022 to 1.026. Now you are ready for a water change. I hope these basic tips were a lesson for some of you and a reminder for others. Tips we can debate on and knowledge we can pass on to others on the Forums.

Peter Kordelski
Charter Member

Newsletter Needs You!

We need writers!

Now, a lot of you think you can't write an article -but we're not only looking for advanced topics here - we need beginners stories, tips, product reviews, and more!

Send us your thoughts any and all are welcome.

Looking forward to working with you.

Sincerely
The Newsletter Committee.

MAAST LIBRARY

Our Library Program has a new look!

Our very own Jack Watkins, (Txav8r) and Jack (Capt. Jack) are responsible for making this important part of the MAAST education come to life. Your hard work is very much appreciated

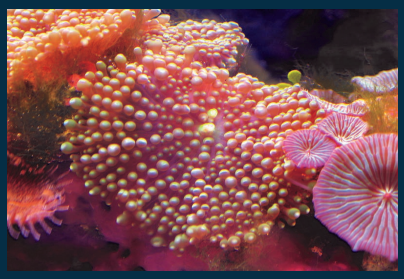
If you have any questions please feel free to contact him via PM. We are delighted to see your work come to MAAST.

Thanks Jack & Jack for your hard work in getting this program up and running! .

EYE ON IT
Species Spotlight

The Ricordea, or Flower Mushroom Coral, is a member of the order Corallimorpharia (Stephenson, 1937), and has short, club, or berry-shaped tentacles. It shares some similarities to stony corals, and is also termed a Disc Anemone. It is found in a variety of color forms.

It requires a medium to high light level, but metal halide lighting may be too bright. It prefers a low water movement within the aquarium, and it may not be as hardy as some of the other mushroom corals. It is considered semi-aggressive and requires adequate space between itself and other corals. It reproduces by longitudinal fission.

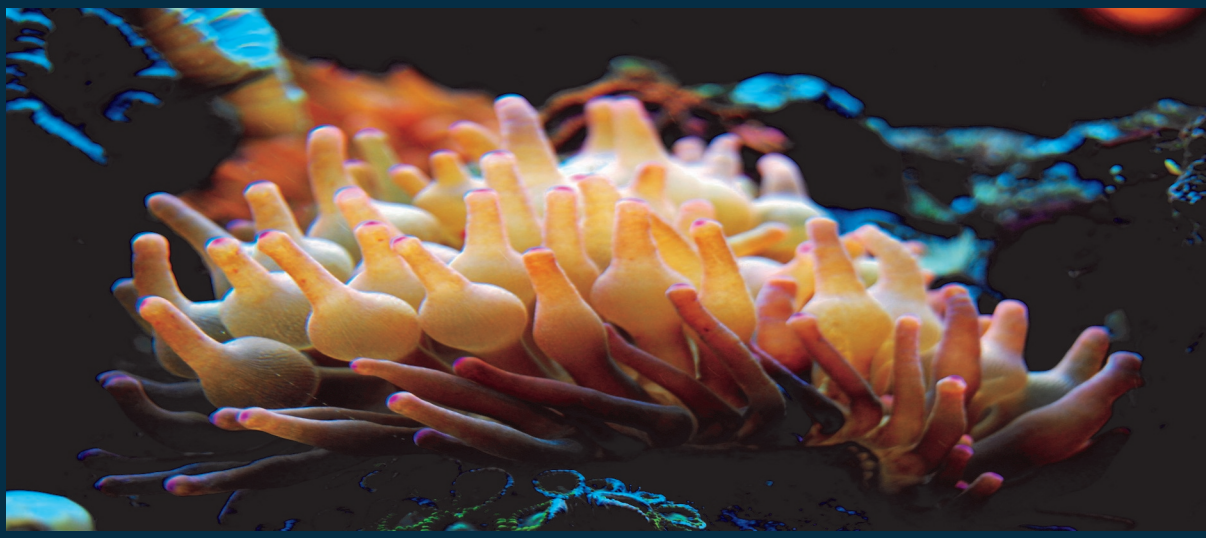


The symbiotic algae zooxanthellae hosted within it provides the majority of its nutritional requirements from the light driven process of photosynthesis. It also eats plankton and smaller invertebrates such as crustaceans.

Information/Photos were compiled with permission from www.liveaquaria.com.

Upcoming Events:

October 25th	November	December 5th	January 2010
TBA	MAAST Austin Tank Tour Details TBA	2nd Annual MAAST Christmas Party 1pm-5pm Dunbar Room San Marcos	TBA



This Month's Aquaria Q&A ...

Question:

Should I do a water change while my aquarium is cycling?

Answer:

Ammonia and nitrite levels need to spike during the cycling process in order for the cycle to continue and finish it's task. If you perform a water change to reduce these levels while the aquarium is cycling, you will only be delaying the completion of the cycle. You will reach the end result (a fully cycled tank) much earlier if you do not perform a water change until the ammonia and nitrite levels drop to zero, and the nitrate level starts rise.

BECOME A CHARTER MEMBER TODAY

Membership

Dues are $25 for the calendar year. These dues quickly pay for themselves by the discounts given that many local stores honor to MAAST members.

We are trying to make our club better, bringing more educational topics, more door prizes and raffle items, and guest speakers. We also have the routine maintenance items like the website, food for meetings, membership dues to national marine organizations, and print/ publication fee's. Membership dues allow our club to keep afloat. and make all of this possible. As always, the website portion of the club will remain free.

Why collect dues?

1. Keeps MAAST afloat.
2. Funds club meetings so host does not have to pay for all out of pocket.
3. Allows for an image gallery on MAAST website.
4. Extra funds go into pool for "expert" speakers at the meetings.
5. Higher quality raffles, higher quality meetings, higher quality club!
6. Eligibility to run for a club office or be appointed to a committee.
7. Eligibility to VOTE!
8. Discounts at participating LFS's and online vendors.
9. A membership card
10. A voice to represent aquarists' interest.

For more information concerning Charter status, please read our By-Laws.

The membership dues are $25.00. Payment can be made either at the meetings, online via PayPal, or with a check mailed to our PO Box below.

PayPal fee's can be sent to **treasurer@maast.org**

or via snail mail to:
MAAST
P. O. Box 780582
San Antonio, TX 78278

Please include name, sign-in name, e-mail, home address, and phone!

Thanks for everyones help and support with this great organization!

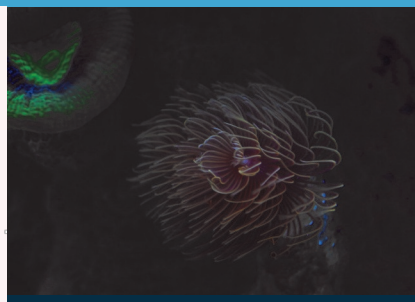


PHOTO CREDITS

P1 - POTM Winner– Ping

P2 - FTS: Puretexn

P4– RBTA: Roscozman

P5- Pillar coral, *Dendrogyra cylindricus*

Www.Wilipedia.com

P6 - Yuma Ricordia
http://www.koralsiden.dk/Art/Ricordea_yuma..jpg

P6-Florida Green/Pink Ricordia
homepage.mac.com/jabaro/Images/GreenRicordia.jpg

P7– Coco Worm– Scorpino

Helpful Tips:

Optimum Levels	
pH	8.1 - 8.3
Specific Gravity	1.026
Alkalinity	8 dKH
Calcium	450 ppm
Magnesium	1350 ppm
Nitrate	0
Phosphate	0 - .01 ppm