

Incredible edible polyps



Safety and guidance



If you have allergies to any of the foods listed below notify your teacher immediately.

Details

What you need

- Scissors
- Toothpick
- Section of banana
- Gummy straws or twizzlers (approx. 30cm in total)
- Round hard biscuits or crackers (approx. 4-5cm across)
- Sugar sprinkles (preferably green)
- Jam (or jelly)

Introduction

During this activity, you will use some common food items to make a model of a coral polyp.

Activity steps

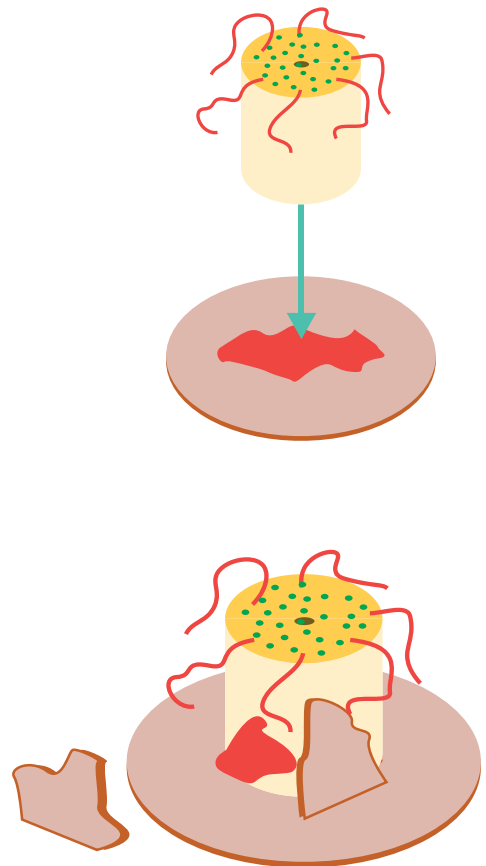
1. Pick up the section of banana. This is your coral polyp.
2. Use the toothpick to make a hole in the top of the banana to represent the polyp's mouth.
3. Make six smaller holes around the outside of the banana. This is where the tentacles will go.
4. Cut the gummy straws into six equal sections and stick them in the holes you have just made.
5. Add the sugar sprinkles to the surface of the polyp to represent the algae (zooxanthellae).



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Activity steps

6. Place your polyp on the cracker or biscuit, using the jam as 'glue'. This represents the polyp sticking to the seafloor.
7. Stick pieces of the cracker or biscuit to the outside of the banana with jam, to represent the corallite.
8. You can make a coral colony by building several polyps and putting them together on the same plate.
9. Parrot fish eat coral using their beaks. You will have to try to eat your coral polyp, just like a parrot fish, without using your hands! This is much easier than copying the crown-of-thorns starfish, another coral predator. These starfish turn their stomach inside out over the surface of the coral. Their stomach juices dissolve the coral before they absorb the half-digested gloop.



Summary questions

1. Name an animal which lives in your local area.

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2. Describe how a coral polyp is both similar and different to your animal

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