

## Pavona (Cactus Coral)

Class Anthozoa, Subclass Hexacorallia, Order Scleractinia, Family Agariciidae



*photo by Mike LaPorte*

**Common names:** cactus coral, lettuce coral, potato chip coral

**Natural Origin:** Indo-Pacific

**Sensitivity (Level 2):** Though scarce in the aquarium trade, these corals can be relatively forgiving and tolerant in healthy aquariums.

**Feeding:** These are very small polyped corals. They feed on very fine particle foods (no need for targeted feeding).

**Lighting (Level 6 to 10):** These corals can adapt to a range of lighting intensities over time but generally prefer more intense lighting. As for all corals, changing lighting conditions can sometimes result in color changes in the coral. Note that when one of these corals changes color, that doesn't necessarily mean the coral is unhealthy. The coral may simply be adapting to your lighting conditions. This is true even of aesthetically unfavorable color changes. As always, take care to acclimate to new lighting conditions.

**Water flow:** Moderate to strong water flow is important for feeding and to prevent sediment damage.

**Placement:** These are peaceful corals. Place safely away from aggressive corals. Be mindful of fast growing encrusting corals that will compete for space.

**General:** These corals have thin, fragile skeletons and interesting growth patterns that often look like clusters of petals. Contrary to normal wild behavior, in captivity, many species extend their polyps during the day. Though not especially fast growing, their resistance to disease upon breaking makes them good corals for captive propagation by fragmentation.