

# What's happening?

## Dec. 8, 2010 - Wednesday

### End of the Year Party:

Time: 7:00 pm

Stacy's Furniture

1900 S Main St, Grapevine 76051

## Jan. 12, 2010 - Wednesday

### First Meeting of the New Year

Time: 7:00 pm

Stacy's Furniture

1900 S Main St, Grapevine 76051

## February 26, 2011 — Saturday

## *Next Wave 2011* and

### *Coral Farmers Market sm*

#### *Event*

**Fort Worth Botanical Gardens**

**3220 Botanic Garden Blvd.**

**Ft. Worth, TX 76107**

**Tickets will be on sale soon!**

**\$25 for full conference**

**\$15 for vendor hall only**

## "Let Celebrate a Terrific Year!"



First, we will be playing DFWMAS version of Minute to Win It. We will have several fun games for everyone to participate in. Don't miss out on the fun OR the prizes for the participant with the lowest time UNDER a minute. Never heard of it? <http://www.nbc.com/minute-to-win-it/> Let's see what **you** can do in 60 seconds!

Next, we will enjoy goodies (that each of you are bringing) and view a slideshow of your tanks. And, just for fun, we will have a dessert contest so make or bake your favorite dessert.

We will end the evening with a White Elephant gift exchange. What is this? "Participants draw numbers from a hat to determine their gift choice order, starting with one, up to the total number of participants. Each person takes a turn choosing a gift. The first person picks a gift, opens it and shows it to the rest of the company. Then the number two participant picks a gift and chooses to either unwrap it or to exchange it for the previously unwrapped gift. If the gift is exchanged, the person who had their gift taken from them gets to unwrap the chosen gift and then the turn passes. When all the gifts have been opened, the game is over." **Each person brings a wrapped fish/marine tank-related item worth no more than \$20.** If you have something of value that is in nearly brand new (or is brand new) condition that you won't use that equals that value, wrap it up and bring it; if you don't have anything, buy something new from your LFS. To keep things interesting, the club is going to pick up extra gifts. Remember, no tags, no markings, no clues.



## President's Pen

Drew Richardson

### Got the Tank Blues? Here's a few ways to get the Fire Burning Again.

We've all hit the proverbial wall with the care of our tanks, but how do you go about staying interested and continuing on through those tough times? I've been taking care of reef tanks for the last 15 years, and I've gone through numerous upgrades, downgrades, teardowns, restocking, and tank builds. Every time there is a totally different challenge, and it's always hard to tear something down completely that you love. Here are some ways to keep the tank running, and everyone enjoying it.

Patience is a virtue that is necessary with aquariums, and very few people have it and follow through with practicing patience. Keep in mind, Rome wasn't built in a day, and the reefs took 10 times the amount of time it took to build Rome. You're trying to recreate something that took millions of years and billions of gallons of water to be perfect -- in a short amount of time in your 100-gallon tank. Pacing yourself not only helps with the safety of the animals, but will keep you from getting burned out too quickly.

The first thing every aquarist has to overcome is the loss of that first fish or coral. Some quickly replace it with a similar animal, but don't forget to look into why you lost that fish. Do a little extra research on why the fish might have died, did it have a disease, or was it beaten up by other fish in the tank? Finding answers to why you lost each animal will help you prepare for the future, and will keep your morale up when caring for your tank, knowing that you are providing the best possible environment for the animals.

As the tank starts to get a little old and boring, try swapping some corals with a few fellow reefers. This is the most productive thing for me, which always gets my interest going again, and raises my level of enjoyment. Make some frags of a few corals you have that are growing well, and post them up for trade or attend one of the frag swaps. It will make you feel better that someone is interested in your corals, and you can often add numerous new corals just by breaking a few pieces off one of your corals. Keep in mind the old saying, "One man's junk is another man's treasure." In reef keeping this is very true; it might not be junk you're giving away, but that large overgrown Monti Cap may be a great piece of trade bait and could bring you back a bounty in return. I've traded every type of coral in my tank. From simple little mushrooms to the most exotic coral you can think of. You never know what people are looking for, so do be afraid to offer or ask.

If making some frags doesn't help, try moving some rock around. Take a Saturday and plan on spending the whole day with your tank. Take your time doing this because you will appreciate it more if you really put some effort into it. Clean all the glass with a razor blade, of course being very careful around the silicone and not to scratch the glass. Cleaning the glass will make you feel like you're seeing the tank again for the very first time. Don't be afraid to move your rock stack around. It will help rejuvenate your interest and make you feel like you've got an entirely new aquarium. When the dust settles and the rock is all in a new place coupled with the glass now be like new, you'll feel that attachment again with the creatures you once loved so much. Don't be afraid to make a few frags while moving corals around. Those can be set aside in a corner of the tank, and mounted later for trading.

If you don't want to stick your hands in the tank because you don't think it's really the problem, then get to your monthly reef club meeting or event. Getting involved will really help you find friends with similar interest and get you talking about reef tanks. As you talk with others about their trials and tribulations you'll feel a kinship and won't feel as isolated with your tank problems. You can discuss the problems you're having and learn a ton from members in a face to face situation. We have 500 members in our club and thousands of people on the boards, and I'm positive you can find a member here that has gone through the same thing

*(continued on page 3)*

**DFWMAS Officers**

Drew Richardson  
President

Marc Levenson  
Vice President  
Membership

Misty Johnson  
Treasurer

Lindsey Angelone  
Secretary

Wes Parton  
Board Member  
Webmaster

Jim Turkett  
Board Member  
Newsletter

Dave Johnson  
Board Member  
Advertising—  
Sponsorship

Jeffrey Dheere  
Board Member  
Librarian

Dennis Freeman  
Board Member

## Don't Miss the Party!

We meet at Stacy Furniture in Grapevine Texas

**7:00 pm to 9:00 pm.**

Map to location: [Google Maps](#)

Stacy Furniture  
1900 S Main St  
Grapevine, TX 76051

*Please park on the side as requested by management—NOT in front of the building. Enter the building and take the elevator to the third floor. We meet in the common room. At the end of the meeting, we are required to clean the room, so please look around your area and leave it super clean.*

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### *President's Message* (continued from page 2)

you're going through. It's always nice to have friends in the hobby.

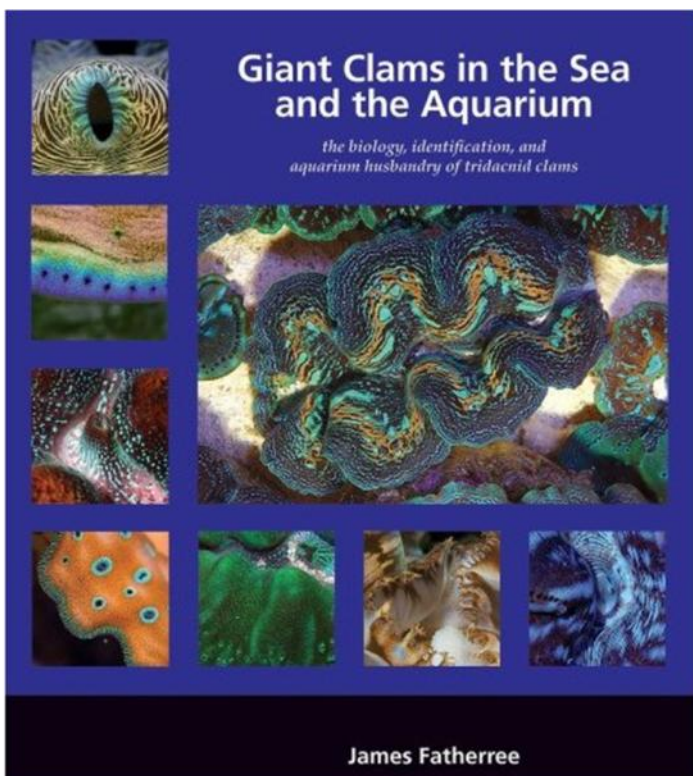
I'm going to end the President's Pen like I'll end everyone from now until February. GET TO NEXTWAVE 2011. This will be the best NextWave the club has ever put on, and will feature some of the best speakers and corals from around the world. The price is very reasonable and you can easily make it a family event. As always if you have questions or comments, you can contact me via email:

[presientdfwmas@gmail.com](mailto:presientdfwmas@gmail.com)

Keep the fire burning and don't forget to enjoy the hobby to the fullest,

Drew Richardson  
DFWMAS President

*Next Wave 2011*



## Giant Clams in the Sea and the Aquarium

By James W. Fatherree

Giant Clams in the Sea and the Aquarium provides comprehensive coverage of the biology and aquarium care of the unique and intriguing tridacnid clams, commonly called giants by aquarists and divers around the world. The book is an 8 x 9 hardback, printed on high-quality gloss paper, and includes over 300 color photographs and illustrations. Martin Moe is a professional marine biologist and commercial marine fish breeder. In addition, he is the author of several other books and internationally known for his contributions to the marine aquarium hobby.

“Put simply, if you are interested in purchasing a clam, buy (or borrow this book from our library) and read this book first. You will more than likely save money in the long-run. In any event, you will have the go-to book on hand when problems and questions arise. The book is written in clear language

and with a wry sense of humor. Recommended without qualification.” – James N. Perlman via Amazon.com review.

“I have met James personally and had the pleasure of having him speak for our marine club (DFWMAS). James knows Tridacnids and his book offers the most comprehensive up-to-date information on the care for Tridacnids. This is a must have book for all Tridacnid clam owners.” - Matt Little, former DFWMAS President via Amazon.com review.

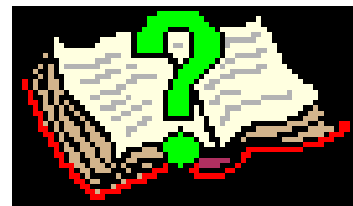
### Jeffrey Dheere

DFWMAS Librarian

**NOTE: Books will not be available at the December meeting. If you want to borrow one, contact Jeff.**

## Rules For Borrowing Items

1. One item per club member per month. Maximum of 2 per household at any one time.
2. There is no deposit required for checking out of items (subject to change).
3. You must provide your username, full name, address, phone #s and email address before you can borrow a book.
4. Items must be returned in the condition they were borrowed (or fines could be imposed).
5. You must be a full member in good standing to borrow books.
6. Contact the librarian (DheereCrossing) to reserve an item—it will be available at the next meeting or arrangements can be made for checking out books between meetings.
7. You must return items before additional items can be checked out. In addition, items must be returned to the librarian by the original person who borrowed them unless otherwise agreed upon (please do not pass books around).



## And you thought you knew...

### Dennis Freeman

Dennis is the newest member of the Board of Directors — joining about three months ago.

**How long have you been in the hobby?** I have been in the saltwater hobby 6 years.

**Where do You Live?** I live in Garland, Texas.

**Where are You From?** I was born in Philadelphia, Penn.

**What is your Occupation?** I have been a civil engineer for 35 years.

**Favorite Movies:** Back to The Future trilogy.

**Favorite Actor:** Morgan Freeman

**Favorite Actress:** Angelina Jolie Pitt

**Favorite Musical Group:** The Beatles

**Favorite Author:** Ayn Rand

**Favorite Dessert and Treats:** Chess pie and Butterfingers

**Favorite Restaurant:** Gloria's

**Pet Peeve:** People that do not follow through.

**Do you have Pets?** I have 2 cats and 1 dog.

**Dream Vacation:** Spend a year in Europe (Plan to do this after my next retirement)

**Hobbies:** Snow skiing, model trains and Halo/Call of Duty video games.

**Family:** I have two adult boys and one granddaughter.

**Who would you like to have as a guest for dinner?** George Washington





**November**

**Winner**

Congratulations to

**simontan**

Keep those wonderful pictures coming.

This is Simontan's second win using an iPhone!!!

So, no one has an excuse — just use a smart phone to take your pictures.



Neptune's Cove opened in February 2007 and is the "largest saltwater specialty store in Texas." Bill Connell is the owner. Bill says he has been keeping tanks since he was in the 4th grade. He has kept saltwater tanks as long as it has been a possibility (starting in 1981).

Neptune's Cove maintains about 4,500 gallons of sales aquariums in the store. Bill doesn't have a "display" tank since he considers everything "for sale" in the store. The specialty of this store is coral reef tanks — having some of the more rare and high-end corals that are on the market. He says he often gets in many exotic and hard to find fish: wrasses, gobies and rare tangs. This store is the place to find anything from damsels to those highly sought-after fish. Recently they had captive raised red-rim batfish, flaming prawn gobies and Achilles-powder blue hybrid tangs as well as filamented Hanae gobies.



As far as corals are concerned, Neptune's Cove has over 1500 different corals in stock. Bill is well known for the selection of rare zoanthids and palys. But, he also has a huge selection of exotic chalices, favia brain corals and clams. Invertebrates currently in stock include: feather starfish, pompom crabs, sexy shrimp and Halloween hermits.

Visit their webpage as you can order online or just browse — especially explore the awesome Zoas pages. AND they also carry Rod's Foods.

Bill says his slogan is "Great selection, Great price, Great advice". In addition, as a member of DFWMAS you can receive a 10% discount. What are you waiting for???

Within the next few weeks Neptune's Cove will be hosting DFWMAS Days (for the second time) . Plan to attend.

## Store Hours

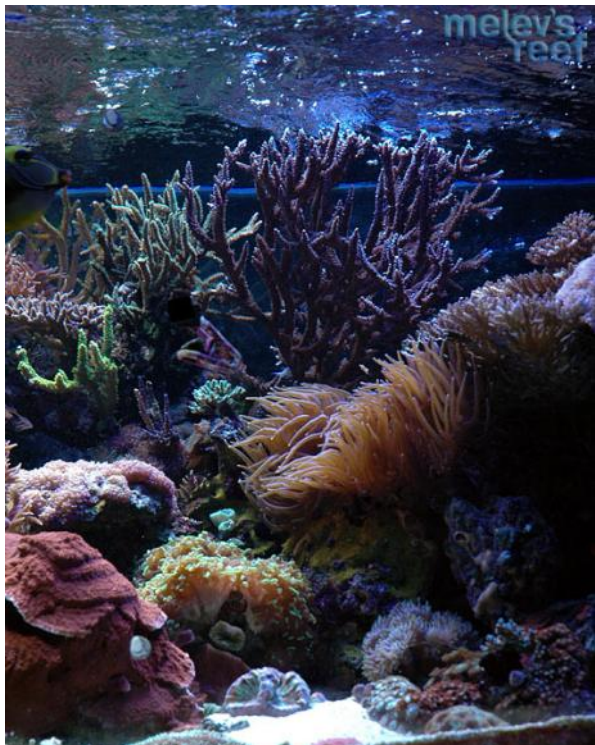
<http://www.neptunescove.net/>

3055 W 15th St  
Plano, TX 75075  
(972) 943-3474

HOURS: Tuesday - Saturday 11:00 - 8:00  
Sunday 12:00 - 5:00  
Mondays we are closed



By Marc Levenson



At our club meeting recently, I pointed out how keeping *Acropora* sp. is often considered the pinnacle of reef keeping. Hobbyists yearn for a full-blown tank that holds these colored sticks that grow into such interesting and unique shapes. The question isn't 'if' you can keep them, but rather 'how long' can you keep them alive to the point of enjoying some thriving colonies. Since they come in blue, green, red, orange, purple, yellow, brown and more, a living *Acropora*-laden reef can be quite the medal of honor if properly cared for.

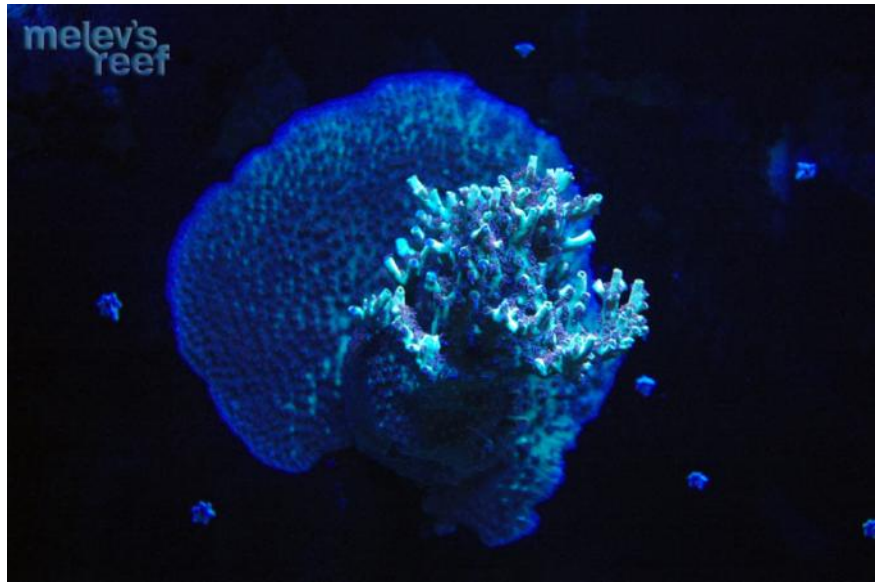
I purchased my first SPS (small polyped stony) coral in 2002, and it was a *Pocillopora*. This little colony, no larger than a golf ball, was my starter piece to see if I had the skill to keep hard corals. Even with much to learn, that coral was a hardy one that tolerated the swings in water quality that my 29-gallon reef suffered from. After a few months, I decided to try *Acropora* as well, and have been keeping them ever since.

A larger tank tends to have more stable parameters, which is where the saying "dilution is the solution to pollution" likely came from. I can firmly state that a larger water volume does help keep pollution levels down, but when those numbers go south it can get costly trying to get them back where they belong. As hobbyists, the biggest impact you'll have on your reef tank has to do with your husbandry skills. The more often you test the water, the better your overview. You'll be quick to make minor adjustments to keep things on track. Another definition for the acronym SPS is "stability promotes success," as SPS definitely thrive under stable conditions.



*Acropora* sp. come in various forms, from thick branchy types to very frail skeletons. They prefer rock solid parameters. Water temperatures don't vary much in their natural habitat, tending to move no more than one degree per day. Our tanks may go up and down two to three degrees in a 24 hour period, but with careful planning and good equipment it is possible to keep this variance tighter. Some species do better in cooler waters, but most tropical-based species seem to hold up well in tanks that range from 79F to 81F. This is simple a target range; if you prefer to keep your tank from 78F to 80F or 80F to 82F, likely you will have good results. The tanks that drop down to 76F or lower at night only to creep up to 82F or 83F daily - those corals are doing all they can to handle that seven degree swing on a regular basis. I don't recommend it. Please note, cooling fans coupled with timers can easily stabilize those summer months, and heaters connected to controllers will keep the water temperature 'normal' during the colder months.

Lighting continues to be an important part of Acropora keeping. Metal Halides (MH) are still the standard, but T5 lighting has probably taken up 20% of the market share if I had to guess. T5s are preferred because they emit less heat than MH and don't require a taller canopy. Be that as it may, I still believe some tanks would do better if the T5 bulbs were 7" off the water; closer to the water the corals seem to be affected by what continues to be untested UV radiation which likely leads to the pastel colors we see. Metal Halide bulbs are usually kept 9" to 12" off the water, if not higher in high quality reflectors. Anyone can

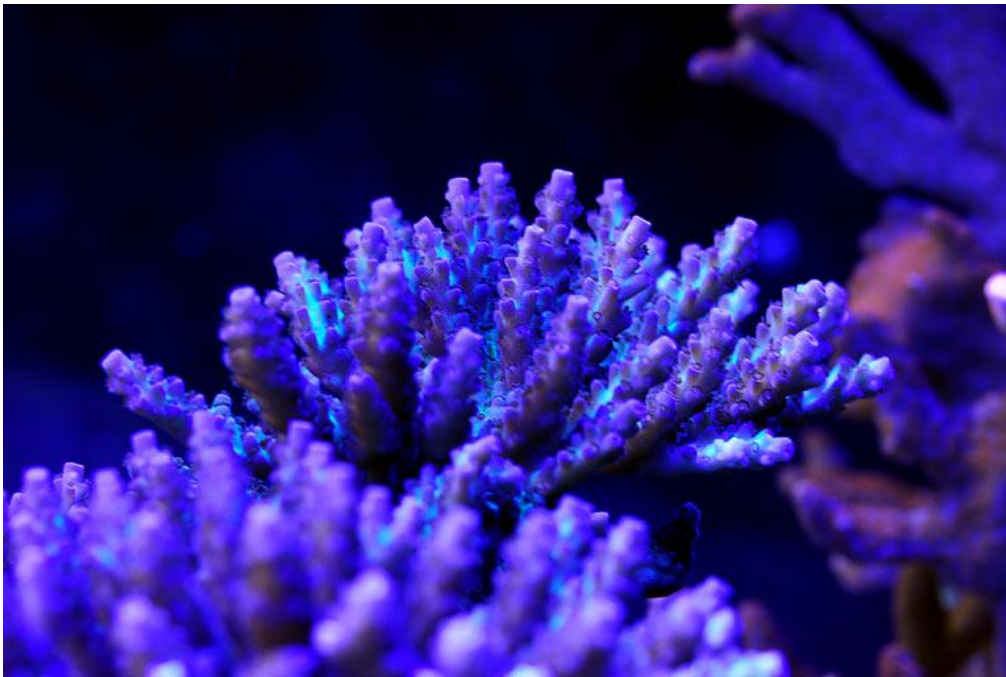


tell the difference between MH and T5 lighting because of how the display appears to the human eye. MH lighting is a focal point that casts a shimmer effect and the reef tank has bright spots and shadows. T5 lighting appears continuous across the entire reef with no variances. Besides these choices, people are beginning to adopt LED lighting for their tanks, and my best advice is to borrow or buy a PAR meter to get some real measurements and avoid burning the corals with intense blasting light. Lift the fixtures higher or run them for shorter periods, gradually increasing the lighting period over multiple weeks until the corals are acclimated to the change. Keep the lights clean ( reflectors, glass shields and the bulb itself ) as spatter and salt film decrease light output that rob your tank of its intended light. Bulb color is a personal choice, but the general rule is 10,000K bulbs promote growth while 20,000K bulbs provide pretty coloration. A combination of bulbs can get the best of both, if you balance them out correctly. Normal lighting for a reef tank should be 9 to 10 hours per day, incorporating a staggered lighting period to include a 'high noon' duration (all lights are on at once blasting the tank) for a few brief hours will provide the best results.

Coral placement is important. How far you distance your SPS corals from the lighting is something you'll learn with time, but often the best choice you can make is place the corals midway down in the aquarium. If they do well for a week or two, move them up a few inches higher and see if they can tolerate the greater PAR your lighting affords them. Find those sweet spots, and watch the corals closely to see if perhaps they'd be better a little further down in the rockwork. A PAR meter helps reduce some of this guesswork, but if we had rock-solid rules, this wouldn't be a hobby. We like to experiment a little. Once you know the spot is good for a coral, be sure to secure it to the rockwork with 2-part putty or Super Glue Gel. SPS corals tend to grow in more quickly when they are affixed firmly, rather than rocking back and forth in the flow. Corals need space to grow out, and if their neighbor is too close, one will usually lose to the other due to chemical warfare as they sting one another.

Flow is critical with Acropora. They need lots of flow to keep their core clean of any detritus which often leads to dying tissue. Once this tissue or skin is gone, nuisance algae is happy to grow in that dead area, spreading out gradually to consume more territory that erodes away more healthy tissue. Acropora colonies often ship in with 'bandit' crabs, commensal crabs that live within the branches and keep the coral clean. They eat tiny predators and ward off attacks by other livestock, but retreat deeply into the coral

to avoid becoming a snack. If you get a coral and find such a crab, it would be best to set that little guy aside prior to quarantining and dipping the coral. Once the coral is safe to add to your display, reintroduce the bandit back into the colony and place it in your reef. Getting back to the topic of flow, this is primarily provided with pumps (Vortech, Tunze, Korallia, or Maxi-jets - these are the four most common choices in the U.S.) that move the water in the display area. Both Vortech and Tunze pumps allow the hobbyist to program in their preferred flow pattern, with chaotic random surges being the ultimate goal. Laminar flow isn't good for Acropora because the coral will simply grow leaning in one direction. Chaotic flow hits the coral from all sides



and coupled with good lighting, each particular species of Acropora will grow into its own natural shape: tabling, pear shaped, bushy, branchy, and encrusting to any solid surface it can find.

Water testing is important for Acropora keepers, who test alkalinity, nitrate, calcium, phosphate, magnesium, as well as salinity, temperature and pH. Keeping these numbers as consistent as possible is the goal. If one swings out of range, such as pH, the coral may stress and release stringy mucous into the water in response. If alkalinity drops too low, tissue will peel off the Acropora, usually around the base. Alkalinity, Calcium and Magnesium are very closely related and must be tested and supplemented continually to replace what the Acropora sp. are taking up from the water. Salinity should always be 1.026sg or 35ppt, and testers should use a calibrated refractometer that was set with 35ppt solution (not RO/DI water!) for accuracy.

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Test Type                      Recommended Parameters matching Natural Sea Water (NSW)

pH	7.9 to 8.3 - this varies from tank to tank; measuring with a Pinpoint Meter or controller is best
Temperature	78° F to 84° F - average reef temperature tends to be 81° F
Alkalinity	8 to 11 dKH or 2.86 to 3.89 meq/L
Calcium	390 to 450 ppm
Magnesium	1350 - 1400 ppm (or 3x Calcium levels)
Phosphate	.03 ppm (leading cause of nuisance algae in your tank)
Ammonia	0 - anything higher is toxic
Nitrite	0 - anything higher is toxic
Nitrate	10 ppm or less (huge water changes bring down nitrates)

Alkalinity and Calcium can be dosed with 2-part buffer solutions or provided with a calcium reactor, and this is a daily requirement for SPS. Magnesium has to be dosed as well, but this one is done every few weeks or longer, based on when the test kits reveals that it has become depleted. Magnesium tends to stay in the water for a long time. Keeping these three in line will keep pH levels up where they belong. Be sure to have current (not old) test kits on hand and use them frequently. Weekly isn't unheard of - its actually a good routine and avoids LRS (Lazy Reefer Syndrome). Be sure to keep a log of those numbers to track trends and learn how to dial in those parameters to maintain optimum conditions.

Phosphate and nitrate levels need to be as low as possible for Acropora sp. Elevated levels stunt their growth and fuel algae growth. Big water changes keep nitrate down, and phosphate removers are abundant to keep that parameter under control. Of course good filtration helps, which is handled with a quality protein skimmer, a refugium for nutrient export, and manually removing any settled waste in the overflows or sump. Rinse out filter socks and sponges often, every three days at least.

Acropora sp. have visible polyps, especially if you have a good macro lens. Each polyp has a mouth that can bring food down its digestive system, and the best free food you can feed this species is fish waste. Feed your fish and when they expel their waste into the water, the corals consume it. Corals that are very pale are usually so because they are starved, either due to a lack of fish or because of amino acid dosing (or due to excess intense lighting for too long a photo period). Feed a little more heavily and these corals will color up again.

It doesn't really take special equipment or vast amounts of money to keep these corals, but it doesn't hurt if you have either. Just remember that these are living corals that need your attention and without your TLC, they will decline. This is definitely a challenging species, but anyone that has kept them successfully will tell you it is worth the effort.

Happy Reefing!!!



## DFWMAS Membership

There are a few things you should know before signing up to join the club - which is a different than registering on the forum. You will see that some users have a "Member" logo with a clownfish; others do not. Those users with that logo under their name have paid to become DFWMAS Members.

### Membership

#### has its privileges!

In the forums you can see special areas that are just for Members - special sales and giveaways are the best part. We also have a special Members Only Directory where you can list your business. We have special tours and meetings just for Members (e.g. the Summer Social party) You get a discount for Next Wave, our annual conference with nationally-known speakers. And of course, the best reason of all, you support a wonderful club full of helpful, generous people.

### **Mission Statement**

- Strives to initiate public interest in the marine aquarium hobby.
- Educates hobbyists regarding the importance of the marine ecosystem.
- Increases knowledge in the husbandry of the marine aquarium system.
- Promotes captive propagation



**First and Last Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Street Address** \_\_\_\_\_

**City, State and Zip** \_\_\_\_\_

**Home Phone** \_\_\_\_\_

**Cell Phone** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email** \_\_\_\_\_

**Forum Screen Name (if applicable)** \_\_\_\_\_

### ***Annual Membership Options - choose one:***

**New \$20**                       **Renewal \$20**

**Attach a check and bring to a meeting**

**or mail to:**

**Membership Chairman**

**P.O. Box 1403**

**Bedford, TX 76095-1403**

You can also apply for membership on our website: <http://www.dfwmas.org>

**Paid \$\_\_\_\_\_ for DFWMAS Membership**

**Circle one:                      New                      Renewal**

**<http://www.dfwmas.org>**