



**JASON THRESHER**

**Age:** 35.

**Hometown:**  
Bookham, Surrey, UK.

**Occupation:**  
IT manager; owner of Reef Culture.

**Marine experience:**  
18 years.

**Tank size:**  
24g D-D Nano Cube.

**Favourite**  
**fish:** gobies and blennies.  
**coral:** zoanthids and polythoa.  
**other:** Pistol Shrimp.

**Specialist areas:**  
Coral propagation.

Photo taken in Tropical Paradise by Mick Choppen.

# FRAGGING RICORDEA'S

**SCIENTIFIC NAMES:** *Ricordea florida*; *Ricordea yuma*  
**COMMON NAME:** RICS, FLORIDA RICORDEA, YUMA

This month **Jason Thresher** demonstrates how to frag the very colourful *Ricordea yuma*. He explains specifically about the fragging techniques for the *Ricordea yuma*, but the same technique will also work for *Ricordea florida*.

**R**ics literally come in every colour of the rainbow and adapt well to the home aquarium, especially if they have been aquacultured. They are widely available and relatively inexpensive, so can add a fantastic splash of colour to your tank without breaking the bank!

Most Ricordea grow and reproduce slowly, so knowing how to frag them can certainly speed up the process. They are, however, a little fragile, and respond less well to fragging, so if you are a first-time Ric fragger, I advise not starting with your prized tri-colour centrepiece! Practice on something a little less expensive. The actual fragging process is reasonably easy, but I will be going into a bit more detail about the post-fragging care, as this is important to the success.

## TOOLS OF THE TRADE

- Slim-bladed scissors: For this specific technique you will need scissors. A scalpel works but it will be much more difficult to recreate the fragging process
- Cyanoacrylate glue: This is used in the second stage of the fragging process
- Glass container: A dessert ramekin works perfectly and won't leach anything into the tank
- Small gravel or crushed live rock: The recovering Ricordea will attach to this
- Netting and rubber band: This is used to prevent the Ricordea frag from being washed away or procured by one of the fish or critters in the tank
- Containers: The trusty containers will house the frags while you work

## HOW TO FRAG RICORDEA

There are potentially two ways to frag Ricordea (other than allowing them to split naturally).

- Cut the crown from the base and cut it up, as was used in the mushroom fragging article
- Leave the mother coral in position and only frag off a small cutting
- Having demonstrated the first technique already, I will show you the second one in this issue. I prefer using this technique for the high-end and tri-colour Rics due to the improved survival rates of the mother colony. By only removing a small section you are limiting the shock that the coral experiences when compared to fully cutting the crown from the base
- For the readers who have not read the mushroom article and want to mass frag lower end Rics, all you need to do is the following:
  - Agitate the Ric until it folds closed, exposing the base
  - Using a scalpel to cut through the base, leave a small stump and remove the crown
  - Working from the centre, cut towards the rim, trying to keep a piece of the mouth on each frag
  - Cut the Ric into four equal slices, as you would a pizza

When fragging high-end Rics it is important

to work out the best place to cut from. Ideally it should already have multiple mouths because this really increases the success rate.

Unlike the mushroom technique, do not agitate the coral to make it close up. It is easier to make accurate cuts when the Ric is inflated. Make two incisions towards the centre of the Ric, making sure you incorporate one of the mouths into the frag. Personally, I would not remove more than about 30% to maximise survival chances of the mother coral. If there is only one mouth, try to cut out a section of the mouth in the two incisions. If unable to do so it's not a problem, although it does seem that frags with a mouth or a piece of mouth recover more successfully.

### MOUNTING THE FRAGS

It is virtually impossible to glue a fragged Ricordea onto a rock or frag plug. This is due to the large amount of slime that results from the fragging process. The best way around the problem is to fill the glass container with coarse gravel or crushed rock and place the new frags onto this substrate. Do not fill the container with sand because the frags need something solid to attach to. You also need to cover the container with the netting to stop any curious critters or fish from damaging the new frags. I find that using a rubber band to hold the meshing in place works very well.

After about a week or two, the frag should show signs of healing, and after about 4-6 weeks they should have attached to the gravel. I have found that Ricordea do not heal as fast as mushrooms, so you will need to be a little bit more patient! After the frag has attached itself to some gravel, all you need to do is glue the gravel to a frag plug or some live rock in the tank.

### POST-FRAGGING CARE

When fragging Rics, some people like to use a light iodine dip after the fragging process, to aid healing and combat possible infection. Others say using iodine during the fragging process stresses the frags and may cause higher frag losses. Personally, I would dip the mother coral and frags about a week after working on them. This will have allowed enough healing time and will combat potential post-fragging infections. You need to place the frags in an area of medium water flow. This is to wash away any slime build-up that might result after the fragging process. It is always worth checking daily how well the frags are healing. If the frags are turning to slime and melting, remove them from the tank immediately, as they could potentially infect the other coral. When fragging, I always advise running carbon because it helps remove organic waste and keeps the water clean.

### FINAL THOUGHTS

Fragging Ricordea requires a little more finesse than the other corals covered thus far in the tutorials, however, excellent results can be achieved with a little patience and good post-fragging care! **JT**

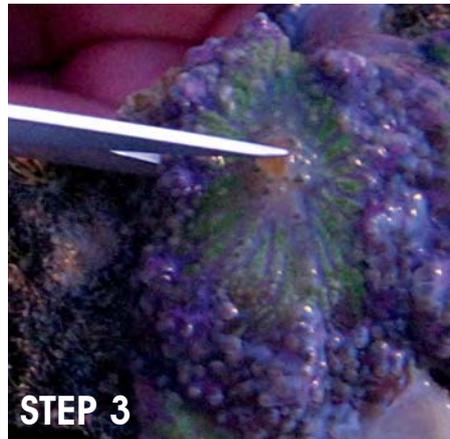
# JASON'S STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO... FRAGGING RICORDEA'S



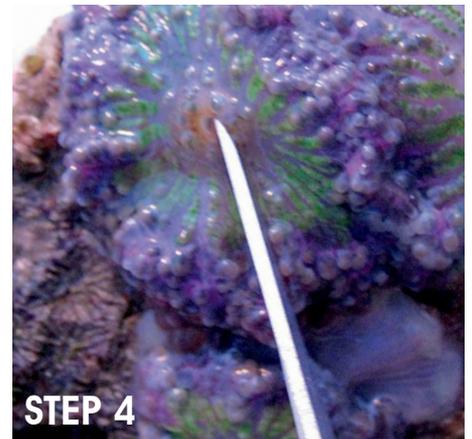
**STEP 1**  
Here you can see the mother colony and all the equipment needed to successfully frag the Ricordea



**STEP 2**  
The Yuma is still nicely inflated, which will make it much easier to accurately cut and remove the frag.



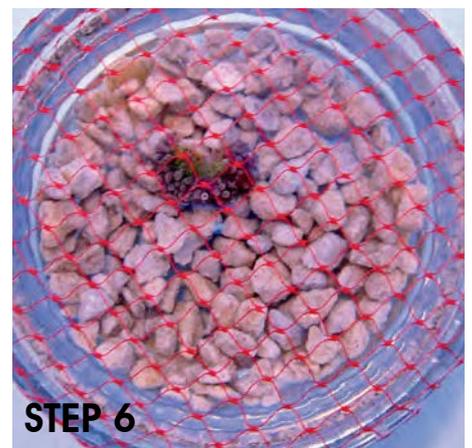
**STEP 3**  
Here I am making the first incision to the Ricordea. Remember to try and cut out a section of the mouth.



**STEP 4**  
I now complete the fragging process by making a second incision towards the mouth like a slice of pizza.



**STEP 5**  
Here you can see how much of the mother colony I am removing. With the high end Ricordea I would only remove a maximum of about 30% of the coral.



**STEP 6**  
The final product! The frag is ready to be returned to the tank and has the mesh in position to protect it from critters in the tank.

Marine Habitat would like to thank John and Ian at SW19 Aquatics for supplying the fantastic Yuma's for the tutorial. If you are local, pop in and have a look at their brilliant displays.