



JASON THRESHER

Age: 35.

Hometown:

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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 polychaeta.

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Specialist areas:

Coral propagation.

FRAGGING GREEN STAR POLYPS

SCIENTIFIC NAMES: *Clavularia viridis*

COMMON NAME: GSP, GREEN STAR POLYPS

In this issue's Fragging feature, **Jason Thresher** gets his hands wet and demonstrates the best way to frag Green Star Polyps.

Most people who own marine tanks have at some stage kept a Green Star Polyp (GSP). Its hardiness makes it the perfect coral for beginners, because it tolerates a wide range of lighting and water conditions. The amazing colours it displays under subdued and blue lighting also make it a worthy addition to most reef tank setups. For all the good things GSP has going for it, it can also potentially become a pest in a very short time. My preference is to keep GSP away from the main live rock structures, as once it takes hold it is extremely difficult to remove and can even smother other corals. I prefer to have 'GSP islands' sitting on my sand bed where I can appreciate them, but also control their invasiveness because they can't attach themselves properly to the substrate. If the coral starts growing wildly, just lift the rock out of the water, and using a pair of scissors, trim the GSP mat that has expanded over the substrate. You could even use the outcuts to make a few frags if you want to.

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TOOLS OF THE TRADE

SCALPEL: The trusty scalpel is used to remove the GSP from the live rock. Make sure you use a nice clean blade. Using an old rusty blade can potentially cause infections in the coral.

CYANOACRYLATE GLUE: The adhesive is used to attach the GSP to the four frag plugs. Using decent glue is important, as you don't want your prize new frag detaching from the plug and floating away!

PLUG PEBBLE: This is a new product designed to help people create 'coral gardens'. The Pebble comes with four plugs that allow you to slot different corals into the holes, which will then fill out to create the coral garden. For the purpose of this article, I will frag GSP onto all the plugs, to eventually have a GSP island that sits on the sand bed.

CONTAINERS: As always, it is useful to have a couple of containers to house the corals before and after fragging.

GLOVES: You may want to wear gloves, although the GSP is not toxic like the zoas or slims like the



mushrooms. The GSP mat is almost rubbery, and is very easy to work with.

HOW TO FRAG GREEN STAR POLYPS

There are potentially three ways to frag GSP.

- Method one involves using a scalpel to remove the GSP from its base and gluing it to a coral mount or some live rock
- Method two involves breaking up the live rock with the GSP into rubble and using the rubble as frags
- Method three involves placing frag plugs or live rock against the GSP colony and allowing the coral to grow onto them. This method actually works extremely well with the aggressive growth rate that the GSP demonstrates

Personally, I don't like smashing up live rock to frag corals and prefer finesse, so I will demonstrate method one. This is a similar fragging technique to what was used for the zoas in the first-ever article (issue 4). If you tried and succeeded in fragging zoas, GSP will be a piece of cake!

The first thing to do is identify the best place to remove the GSP from the live rock. A good little tip is to use the colour of the GSP mat as a guide. The more mature part of the coral will be a deep purple or maroon colour, whereas the new growth is usually a light pink colour. This is where you want to start working from.

Slide the scalpel under the mat and start working your way up the coral. It is also worth mentioning that the GSP mat is more brittle than the zoa mat, so work slowly. When you have fragged as much GSP as you need, cut it from the mother colony.

POST-FRAGGING CARE

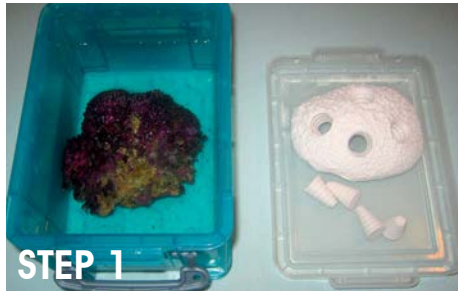
GSPs appreciate good water flow, but they will need lower flow while they recover from the fragging process. About 2-3 weeks should be enough time for them to bed down and attach to the frag plug or live rock. You can then move the coral to a higher flow part of the tank, which will promote good healthy growth. The water also brings nutrients, which further aids development.

As with all fragging, always keep an eye on how the corals are recovering. If the corals are looking poorly after a few days, it is sometimes worth removing them from the tank altogether, to avoid infections spreading to the other frags. It is always worth running carbon while the corals are recovering after a fragging session.

FINAL THOUGHTS

GSP is another good coral to practise on, and is very forgiving of mistakes. It recovers well from the fragging process and will quickly fill out to add some visual impact to your tank. **JT**

JASON'S STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO... FRAGGING GREEN STAR POLYPS



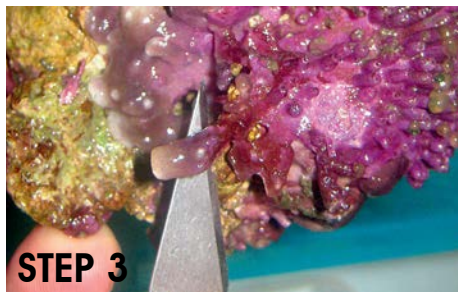
STEP 1

This is the GSP mother colony I have chosen to frag. It is being housed in a container with all the tools nearby. GSPs are hardy, so having the colony out of the water while fragging will not cause any harm. You can also see the Plug Pebble that will be used to frag the GSP onto for grow-out.



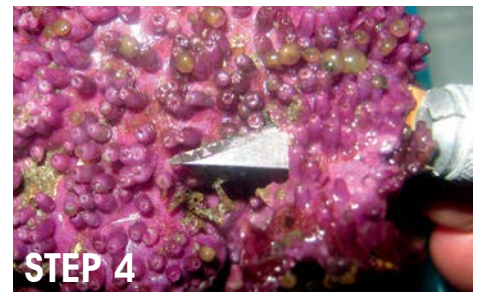
STEP 2

This involves having a good look at the colony you want to frag and identifying possible locations where you can start removing the coral from the live rock. Remember to look for lighter pink or purple sections of growth; this should be a good place to start.



STEP 3

I have identified a good spot to start fragging. It is important to work slowly because the GSP mat can sometimes be brittle, which makes it prone to breaking. Don't worry if you make a mistake though. GSP is a lot more forgiving than the expensive red hornet zoas and will recover quickly from any accidents!



STEP 4

Work the blade under the zoa mat and remove a few good pieces for the frag plugs. GSP does not attach to live rock as strongly as zoas, and once you are able to get the scalpel under part of the colony, the rest will just peel off. Place the frags into the container with tank water, as once they have been removed from the main colony they are prone to dry out.



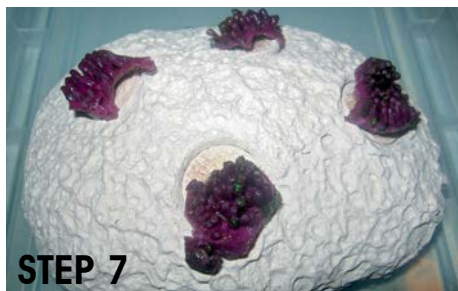
STEP 5

You can see how well the GSP has peeled off, making the final steps nice and easy. It is a good idea to cut the GSP to size so that they fit nicely onto the plug. Use scissors or bone cutters.



STEP 6

Use decent reef glue to attach the GSP to the coral mount you have chosen, and when you are done place it back in the tank. Don't place the frag in full flow yet; you want to give it a couple of weeks' recovery time and allow it to attach to the plug by itself.



STEP 7

This rock is a fantastic product and is available on my website: www.reefculture.co.uk It aids in quickly covering a rock with these handy little plug holes to place frags.



STEP 8

After a few months under optimal growing conditions, the GSP will have doubled in size and smothered most of the rock. After a few years, you'll have plenty of pruning to do.

