

shopping list for needed supplies

- appropriate size aquarium
- appropriate food, dry and frozen
- décor
- water conditioner
- aquarium salt
- filter
- water test kit
- full spectrum lighting - T5 recommended
- net
- thermometer
- protein skimmer
- marine substrate
- heater
- hydrometer
- airstone
- air pump
- book about soft corals

sources

Speak to an associate about the Petco library of books on soft corals.

Speak to an associate about our many private brand items available for the care and happiness of your pet.

Because all aquatic life are potential carriers of infectious diseases, such as Salmonella, always wash your hands before and after handling your aquatic life and/or habitat contents to help prevent the potential spread of diseases.

Pregnant women, children under the age of 5 and people with weakened immune systems should contact their physician before purchasing and/or caring for aquatic life and should consider not having aquatic life as a pet. For more information regarding aquatic life and disease, go to the Center for Disease Control at cdc.gov/healthypets/ and petco.com/caresheet.

This care sheet can cover the needs of other species. See petco.com for more information.

soft coral

includes leather corals, mushrooms, zoanthids, star polyps and xenia



care sheet

Soft corals are leathery or fleshy colonies with a soft skeleton. They are hardier than hard corals and grow rapidly.

soft coral facts:

average adult size:	depends on species, feeding habits and age
average life span:	depends on species
diet:	photosynthetic
minimum aquarium size:	29-50 gallons, depending on species
water temperature:	75-80°F
salinity level:	1.020-1.026



Habitatitude

Note: The information on this Care Sheet is not a substitute for veterinary care. If you need additional information, please refer to the sources on the following page or contact your veterinarian as appropriate.

diet

- A well-balanced soft coral diet consists of:
- Some soft corals are filter feeders and must have an ample supply of small suspended particles and nutrients in the water.
 - Some coral live off of the photosynthetic algae in their tissue.
 - Liquid coral food.

feeding

Things to remember when feeding your soft coral:

- Feed once or twice weekly, depending on species.
- Calcium and trace mineral supplements should also be given.

housing

- Keep in an appropriate size aquarium; full spectrum, high intensity lighting (T5 is recommended) and strong filtration are essential.
- **Stable water quality, water temperature, and pH levels are critical to the health of the invertebrate. If you are unsure of your water quality or pH levels, Petco provides free water testing.**

characteristics

- Soft corals require increased lighting, filtration and water flow.
- Use of copper-based medications is toxic to soft coral.

habitat maintenance

Daily: check filter, water temperature and other equipment.

Weekly: check water quality at least once a week; check salinity levels at least twice a week.

Monthly: change 10-25% of the total volume of water every 2-4 weeks, or as needed. Provide stable decor or rocks for attachment by sessile corals

compatibility

Soft corals can secrete a defense chemical that inhibits the growth of nearby corals, they should not be placed close to other sessile (attached at the base) invertebrates. Some angelfish and butterfly fish may nip at polyps.

signs of a healthy soft coral

- Smooth, rigid body
- Fully open polyps

Avoid overcrowded conditions; they are a major cause of stress and disease. Maintain good water quality with regular water changes and adequate filtration.

red flags

- body or surface erosion
- tissue erosion
- polyps are closed for long duration of time
- limp, slumped stalk

common health issues

Health Issue	Symptoms or Causes	Suggested Action
body or surface erosion	poor water quality; nutrient deficiency	test and treat water immediately; maintain proper diet.

If you notice any of these signs, test water quality and improve as necessary.