60 mins

12

Build your Own Edible Pink Sea Fan

Equipment required (per learner)

- 'Build your Own Edible Pink Sea Fan' worksheet, one per learner, or shared digitally
- 1 paper plate
- 1 large marshmallow
- 2 strawberry laces – cut into 8 pieces
- 1 straw
- 1 toothpick
- 1 spoonful of jam (any flavour)
- 1 teaspoon
- 2 round biscuits (e.g. rich tea)
- Green, pink, or red sugar sprinkles

To complete the activity

1. Share the 'Wales Best of the West' video with the learners – www.tiramor.cymru/pinkseafan (Resource 1).

2. Ask learners to share some examples of marine life they noticed in the video. How might these organisms be connected to each other within their environment? At 0:42 in the video, ask learners to identify what the scuba diver is looking at. Do they think it is a plant or an animal?

3. Correct any misconceptions. It's easy to think that coral is a plant, but they're in fact small animals. Each coral colony contains many individual coral animals, each known as a coral polyp. They share a hard skeleton made of protein and calcium carbonate.

4. Share the 'Build your own edible pink sea fan' worksheet and support learners to create their own coral polyp.

5. After completing their model, ask learners to reflect on what they learned about coral polyps. Discuss how the model represents real-life features and why these features, like tentacles, are important for survival.

ADDITIONAL TASK

Encourage learners to use The Marine Life Information Network website to view where pink sea fans are found: www.tiramor.cymru/pinkseafan (Resource 2). Ask them to identify the areas around the UK where pink sea fans are located and describe the types of habitats they prefer.

Important Note: Always check for allergies beforehand and follow your school's guidelines for handling food during activities.

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What you will need

- 1 paper plate
- 1 large marshmallow
- 2 strawberry laces
- 1 straw
- 1 toothpick
- 1 spoonful of jam
- 1 teaspoon
- 2 round biscuits
- Green, pink or red sugar sprinkles

STEP 1: Prepare for the experiment

A. Wash your hands before starting.

B. Ensure all your equipment is clean and ready to use.

STEP 2: Create the polyp body

A. Place your marshmallow in the centre of your paper plate.

B. This represents the body of your coral polyp.

STEP 3: Make the mouth and stomach

A. Take a straw and carefully poke a hole in the centre of the marshmallow.

B. Remove the straw, leaving the hole behind. This represents the mouth and stomach of your coral polyp.

Coral polyps use this hole to eat and digest food, with their tentacles helping to catch tiny food pieces and guide them inside. Pink sea fans have just one hole that they use for both.

STEP 4: Add tentacles

A. Use a toothpick to create 8 small holes around the marshmallow.

B. Cut your strawberry laces into 8 small pieces (about 3cm each).

C. Insert the strawberry lace pieces into the holes. These represent the tentacles of your coral polyp.

STEP 5: Attach your polyp to its base

A. Use a spoon to spread a small amount of jam onto one of your round biscuits.

B. Stick the marshmallow onto the jam. This represents the coral polyp gluing itself to a rock.

STEP 6: Add skeleton protection

A. Break the second biscuit into 4 pieces.

B. Arrange these pieces around the marshmallow. These represent the coral skeleton, which provides protection and structure to the polyp.

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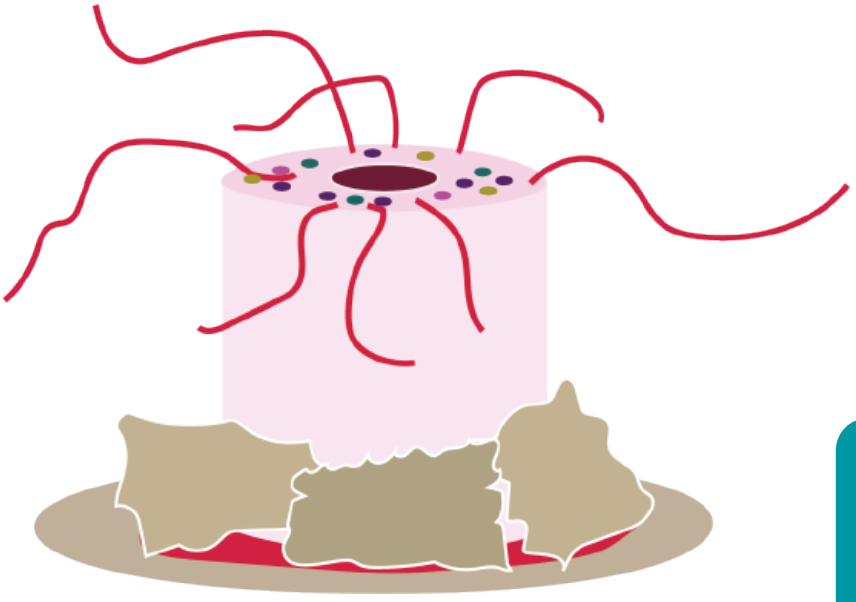

STEP 7: Add algae
A. Sprinkle some sugar (green, pink, or red) on the marshmallow. This represents the algae that live inside the coral.

Some corals produce food by teaming up with tiny algae that live inside their bodies. These algae use sunlight to create energy through photosynthesis, similar to how plants make food. The algae shares this energy with the coral, while the coral provides nutrients and a safe home for the algae.

STEP 8: Form a coral colony
A. Work with 2 other learners.
B. Place your marshmallows (coral polyps) close together on one plate to represent a coral colony.
C. If you have permission, you can eat your coral polyp creation!

Pink sea fan coral is made of colonies of tiny animals called polyps. These polyps live together, working as a team to form the coral!

ADDITIONAL **TASK**

Encourage learners to use the Marine Life Information Network website to view where pink sea fans are found: www.tiramor.cymru/pinkseafan (Resource 2).
Where along the the Welsh coast are pink sea fans located? What types of habitats do pink sea fans prefer?

A coral polyp with 8 tentacles is called an octocoral, as "octo" means eight.