

## Corals are Animals, not Plants & not Rocks

### Symbiotic Partnership with Zooxanthellae

"Zoox" are tiny green plants called algae. They use photosynthesis to make sugar for themselves but they also share their sugar with the coral polyps.

In addition, the Zoox help the polyps make their limestone coral homes.

In return the coral give the zoox a home

When the ocean gets too warm the zoox leave the coral. Without the zoox making sugar the coral starves to death.

### Phytoplankton & Zooplankton

"Plankton" = tiny floating plants and animals

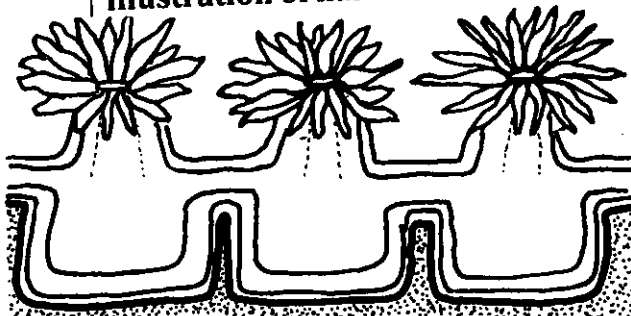
"Phyto" = tiny floating plants

"Zoo" = tiny floating animals

### Build their own homes

Polyps (with the help of zoox) build their own homes out of calcium carbonate (also called limestone) that they get from sea water.

#### Illustration of hard coral:



polyps of a hard coral colony



polyps of a soft coral colony

Polyps of soft corals always have eight pinnate (feathery) tentacles; polyps of hard corals never do.

### Scientific Illustration of a polyp:

