

## Coral

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The coral polyp belongs to a low form of life inhabiting the warmer oceans of the world. Its branching colonies may grow into enormous structures, such as the Great Barrier Reef off the east coast of Australia.

The rose-colored or red coral, well known in cheaper jewelry, is chiefly found in the Mediterranean Sea and originates from the coral polyp *Corallium rubrum*. The animal multiplies by budding and splitting, and each division grows into a perfect new polyp consisting of a mass of jelly provided with numerous tentacles. It spends its life attached to submerged rocks and deposits a hard skeleton of calcium carbonate around the outer part of its body. Only this hard skeleton remains when the animal dies, and it is this skeleton that is known as coral.

The coral-fishing industry is now almost entirely confined to Italy and Japan, and most of its produce is exported to countries of the East.