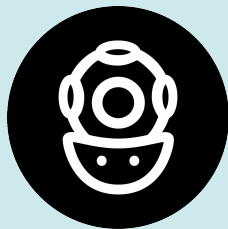


I Dive At Home

Coral Garden



activity **Deep Sea:**

Coral Garden

When we think about corals, we imagine a tropical reef full of light, fishes, crabs and other colorful creatures.





Half of the coral species we know can be found in deep, dark and wonderful cold waters (between 4°C and 12°C)!



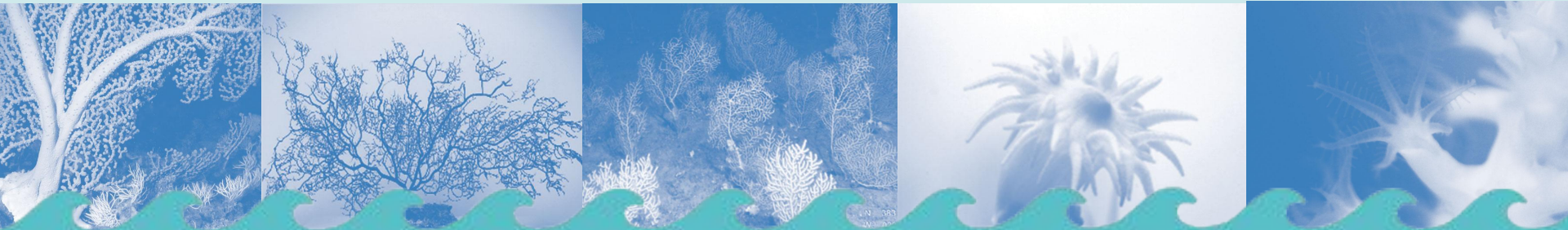
Corals look like plants!

They have similar shapes and they have polyps that look like leaves and flowers! Their skeleton is made of growth-rings!

But they're animals!

They are **cnidarians**, like anemones and jellyfishes. They are colonial animals formed by repetitive modules- **the polyps**.

They grow up very slowly and they can generate **colonies** several meters tall and hundreds or thousands years old.



Did you know that:

- **Corals feed on particles that they get from the water:** phytoplankton, zooplankton, bacteria or dissolved nutrients?
- **Corals get their food using the tentacles and they bring it to their mouth closing the tentacles?** The digestion occurs inside each polyp.
- **The corals are found in areas with currents because that's where more suspended particles can be found?**

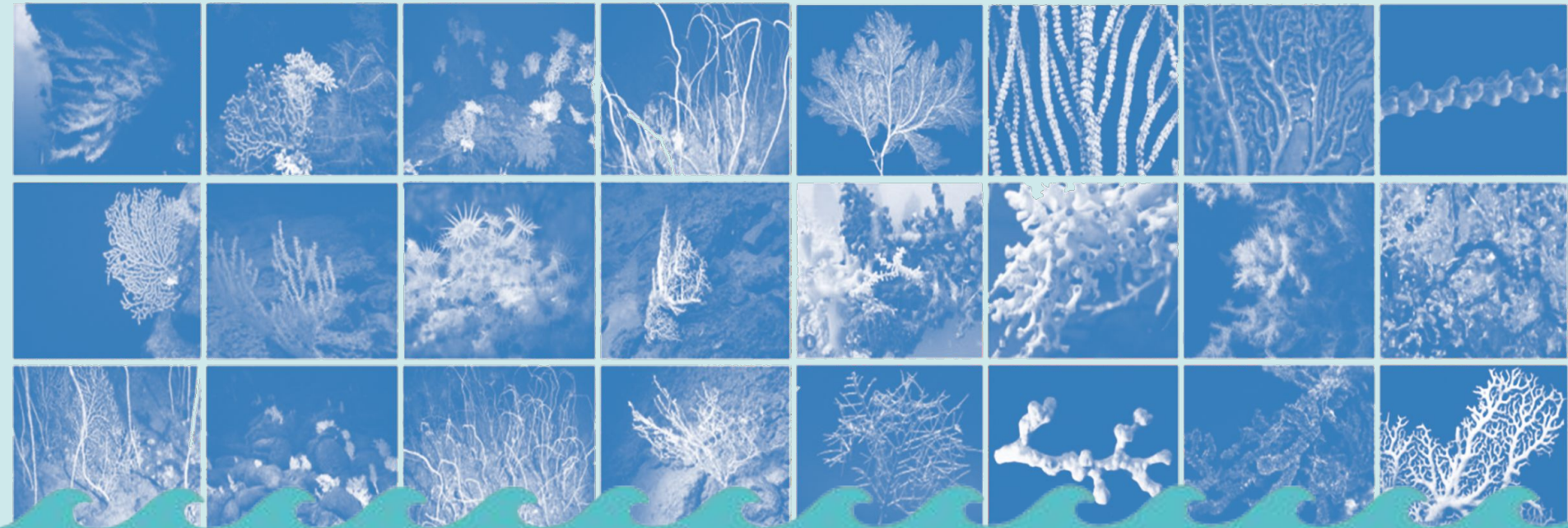


Why are corals so important ?

- They **create habitats** to other marine creatures, like fishes.
- They **play an important role in the carbon cycle**; they fix the carbon on their structural parts (organic and inorganic).
- They **produce big amounts** of mucus, that constitute **food for other species**.
- Some of them, like the black coral, **develop rings in their skeleton that record the environmental conditions!** This records are extremely important to recreate the ocean's history!



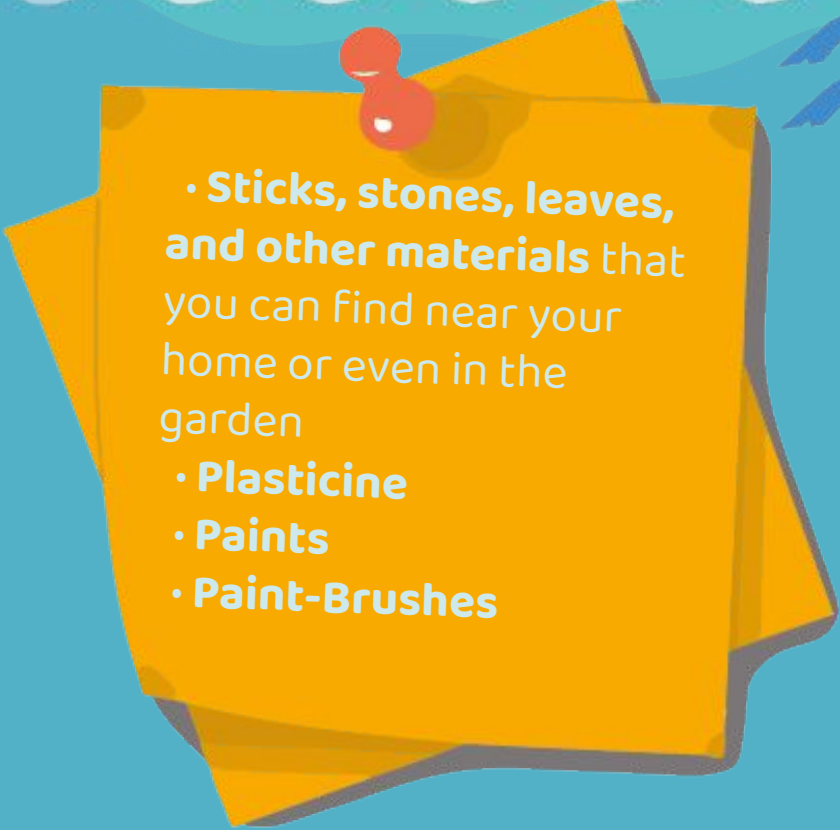
Did you know that in the Azores you can find more than 150 deep-water corals species?



Corals create wonderful gardens! Today we are going to recreate one of these gardens at home!

Should we start?





- **Sticks, stones, leaves, and other materials** that you can find near your home or even in the garden

- **Plasticine**

- **Paints**

- **Paint-Brushes**



You will need:

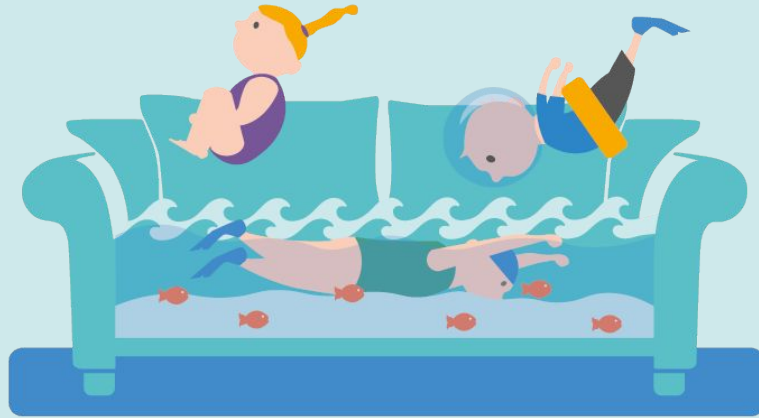


- 1) Choose a place for your coral garden.
- 2) Have a look at the pictures in the previous slides and choose the materials you have that most look like these species.

- 3) To fix the corals, first make a base with plasticine.
- 4) Paint your garden with the colours you like.

Keep your garden! You'll need it for another activity!

We hope you had fun and enjoyed! New activities coming up soon! Stay tuned!



I Dive At Home

Don't forget to share your dive with us, using the hashtag

#IDiveAtHome