



The President's Pen

Fall is upon us and with that are expected falling temperatures. This is seen as a blessing for the majority of us reefkeepers due to our tanks generating a lot of heat from pumps and lighting. With that in mind, be sure to check your heaters to ensure that they are working properly and you don't get caught unprepared and end up with a chilly tank. Dialing in your heaters to minimize temperature swing between day and night will help minimize stress to your livestock. Be sure to monitor your tank temperatures closely as the change in ambient (outdoor) air temperature and humidity will have an effect on your tank temperature as we change seasons.

During the change in seasons I also like to make a point to check/change all necessary filtration, clean pumps, RODI filters, refractometer calibration, pH monitor, temperature sensors, etc.

Coral Farmers Market in Dallas

Saturday, November 14th, 2009

www.da-cfm.com

10:30am to 4:00pm

Holiday Inn Select North Dallas

2645 LBJ Freeway (I-635)

Dallas, TX 75234

DFWMAS offers the **cheapest rate** to Members Only....\$8.00. Tickets retail for \$15 online, rise to \$25 one month prior to event, and \$35 at the door. Don't miss out on this great deal and a very good opportunity to purchase coral frags from vendors ranging from Texas, Colorado, and California. There will be door prizes, coral auctions, and raffles. Children 12 and under are free if accompanied by an adult with a ticket. Tickets can be purchased online at <http://dfwmas.org/Membership/dfwcfm.html> and/or at our monthly meetings.

Happy Reefing!

Matt Little

President DFWMAS

Why I Like: "The Easy Scraper"

By Marc Levenson

Some products hit the market quietly. The Easy Blade has been around for a while, but I didn't want to get one until it had its own cleaning magnet -- so I finally got both!



The scraper comes with one razor blade (double-edged), so I also got a 10-pack for back up.



I laid out all the goodies, which is fairly straight forward. All you do is glue the scraper to the magnet's inner section (the half with the rough pad). I used Super Glue Gel. When gluing, make sure the blade hangs off the end of the work area, not pressing down on the work surface. The goal is to have the scraper slightly lower than the cleaning pad.

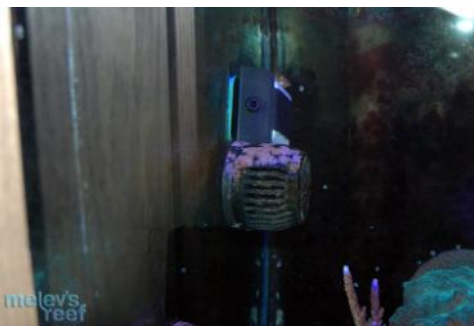


I let it cure overnight. The next morning, I adjusted the small screw so the blade extended, and got to work.



It did a great job, cleaning along the sand line and fully into those hard to reach corners. It works around the Vortech pumps in my tank, and what I really like is how the blade reaches further than the magnet itself. When cleaning around the motor of the Vortech pump, the cord tends to be in the way, but the scraper does a great job without having to get under that wire with the entire magnet. You just scrape from either side to clear away any algae.

It is important not to run this blade parallel with the silicone, because it will slice right under it. Better to work toward the silicone perpendicularly, nibbling away at film algae and coralline.



Once done, I took it out of the water, rinsed it off, and removed the blade. It was rinsed well, dried and wrapped in a paper towel until next time. I wouldn't recommend reusing a blade more than once though, as the chance that it has nicks or burrs that may scratch the glass increases significantly.

I've been using it on the back panel as well, which is normally tough to reach behind the corals. The Easy Blade works nicely due to its low profile. I've also used it to scrape the glass overflows, holding it in my hand while working from the back side of the tank.

This tool is definitely worth adding to your arsenal of reef gear, and should be used occasionally to really clean up the tank. For day to day maintenance, I use a different cleaning magnet that is always in my tank. Try it out; you won't regret it.



*If you have an acrylic aquarium, this product is not for you.

Tools of the Trade

By Ben Hegi

As we all know, algae are a critical part of the earth's ecosystem. They are the planet's most important producers of oxygen and a key food source for thousands of species of animals. Marine aquarists are all familiar with algae and most likely deal with them on a regular basis on some level, whether it is the regular scraping of that thin green film off glass or acrylic walls or harvesting *Chaetomorpha* or *Caulerpa* from a refugium. As in nature, algae play an important part in the ecosystem of our reef microcosms. Unfortunately, some algae do so well they become a nuisance and impede the growth of more desirable reef inhabitants, especially corals; thus, we are forced to deal with this problem through biological control, chemical filtration, improving source water, and/or mechanical removal. This is the case in hobbyists' aquariums as well as aquaculture facilities and both hobbyists and professionals will, at some point, have to turn to some mechanical means of removal, which can be anything from a simple toothbrush to algae magnets. Hopefully this article will prompt the reader to pick up some tools we use at the farm to aid us in our fight against nuisance algae.

At Lone Star Aquaculture we have become familiar with the rainbow of algae species that often arrive on wild colonies, maricultured colonies, and even other aquacultured specimens. Ideally these pests are dealt with in our quarantine tank but some still make their way into our culturing systems. Despite utilizing a top of the line RO/DI water filtration system and keeping nutrients in check through chemical means coupled with active skimming and ozone we still have to roll up our sleeves and apply some elbow grease to deal with algae outbreaks.

After almost a year of running the daily operations at the farm I have arrayed an arsenal of tools that make our war on algae more efficient and productive. The major difficulty we encounter is the ease in which algae are able to colonize the ceramic discs and plugs we utilize to grow our corals on [see Figure 1]. Fortunately, there are many cheap, easily accessible tools available to the public at grocery stores, DIY stores such as Home Depot and Lowes, Walmart and Target, as well as hobby stores that make dealing with algae much easier. Figures 2 and 3 show the tools we use at the farm to combat algae. For the rest of the article I'll discuss some of them and how we employ them.



The basic tool that even the newest hobbyist is familiar with is the toothbrush. I find it is important to have both the medium and soft bristle variety. The medium bristle brushes allow you to dislodge the tougher algae on rocks or plugs/discs around the coral while most soft bristle brushes can be used lightly to remove algae growing on corals themselves or around their base. Of course, even the soft bristle brushes should be used primarily on sps and "tougher" soft corals such as members of the *Sarcophyton* genus (toadstools) and Green Star Polyp mats (*Briareum* species). More delicate-tissued soft corals like *Cespitularia* and *Xenia* species can be damaged by even soft bristle toothbrushes, so it's important to be careful when cleaning areas around their base.



Another group of useful tools can be found alongside the toothbrushes or perhaps in your bathroom drawer. Here I am speaking of dental picks. In Figure 2 you can see several different varieties that we use. These are very useful for dislodging and removing sponge algae, so-called cotton candy red turf algae, and other clumping species that tend grow in between the branches of colonies of *Seriatopora* and other sps. I've found it's best to use a pick that has a soft brush on one end, such as the two Dentek varieties shown in Figure 2, versus the Doctor's Brush Picks, which employ a flat plastic brush.

Tools of the Trade

(cont'd)

In addition, both the Dentek brushes allow you to gently clean the detritus off of *Zoanthid* and *Palythoa* mats that sometimes accumulates between polyps without damaging or irritating the colony. I found all three varieties at a Drug Emporium here in Denton, but have also seen them offered for sale at Kroger, Walmart, and Target for between \$2 and \$3 a pack. It's also useful to purchase several forceps of varying lengths that will allow you to pluck larger chunks of the types of algae mentioned above directly out of colonies you're working on. They, of course, can be used for a wide variety of tasks in the aquarium besides cleaning and are available through medical supply stores or popular online aquarium supply stores such as Marine Depot and Premium Aquatics. The ones that we use at the farm are pictured in Figure 3.



The final group of tools I'd like to discuss is stainless steel blades [see Figure 3]. X-acto knives are essential for battling algae and allow you to precisely scrape off patches close to corals without injuring the animals. I prefer the No. 11 Classic Fine Point Blades, which are readily available at hobby stores such as Michael's and Hobby Lobby. Common straight edge blades are also very useful for cleaning around corals as well as aquarium walls. They are cheap and readily available at Home Depot and Lowes. We use plastic putty knives as well as the plastic Kent scraper pictured in Figure 3 to scrape the walls of our fiberglass tanks as steel blades can potentially damage them. Both blades can also be utilized to carefully frag *Xenia* species by lifting the base of clones before attaching them to discs or rubble rock.

With all the tools mentioned above it is important to make sure you clean them thoroughly before using them on different corals so as not to expose them to potentially harmful chemicals corals produce to combat intrusion by neighbors. This is especially important for more potent species such as those in the genera *Cespitularia* and *Sacrophyton*. In addition, be sure to pick up some latex gloves and always use them when handling corals and liverock in your tanks. They are useful in preventing cuts and scrapes and also prevent you from exposing your corals to potential harmful oils or chemicals that may be present on your hands.

I hope this short article will prompt the reader to pick up some of the tools I mentioned and will aid you in your battle against algae. I'm always on the lookout for new tools to aid in this endeavor and if you keep out a sharp eye at the local grocery store or Home Depot you're sure to find new tools that can be applied to this end. Happy reefing!

Next Meeting

Wednesday, October 14, 2009

Stacy Furniture in Grapevine

1900 South Main Street

Grapevine, TX 76051

[Click here for a map.](#)

The meeting is held in the community room on the 3rd floor.

Marc Levenson will discuss setting up a Fish Room for an In-Wall Display Tank - With good preparation and planning, the room behind your reef tank can be a huge asset. Learn what to do before you start, as well as what can be done now to improve an established 'man cave.' Lighting, temperature, ventilation and the foundation are all important considerations, plus much more. This talk will be good for the DIYer as well as those that prefer to hire a contractor.

[Click here for more information!](#)

September Picture of the Month Submitted by txraider



And you thought you knew... Donny Powell, a.k.a. dp1416

How long have you been in the hobby? I started 18 years ago with a 46 bowfront and thought it was the best. Back then it was all about mushroom and berlin filters. Now i have the 700+ (total water volume) monster.....My, oh my, how have times changed.

Where do you live?

Fort Worth, Texas

Where are you from?

Fort Worth, Texas

What do you do for a living?

Sr. Account Manager—
Medical Sales

Favorite movies: Step Brothers

Favorite Actor: Denzel
Washington

Favorite Actress: Julia Roberts

Favorite Musical Group: Norah Jones

Favorite Author: Hot Rod Magazines—all of them

Favorite Quote: "Whatchu talkin bout Willis?"

Favorite Holiday: July 4th, love fireworks and lake activities

Favorite Restaurant: Too many to list, love me some Mexican food!

Pet Peeve: Cold weather and Rain

Do you have pets? Just Rocky the African Sulcta Tortoise

Dream Vacation: Would love to go to the Great Barrier Reef

Hobbies: Football, Hot Rods, Choppers and drinking beer with my friends playing poker.

Family: My wife Melissa and son Cooper (4)

How do you want to be remembered? As a great husband, father and best friend.

Who would you like to have as a guest for dinner? My family, can never get enough of them



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