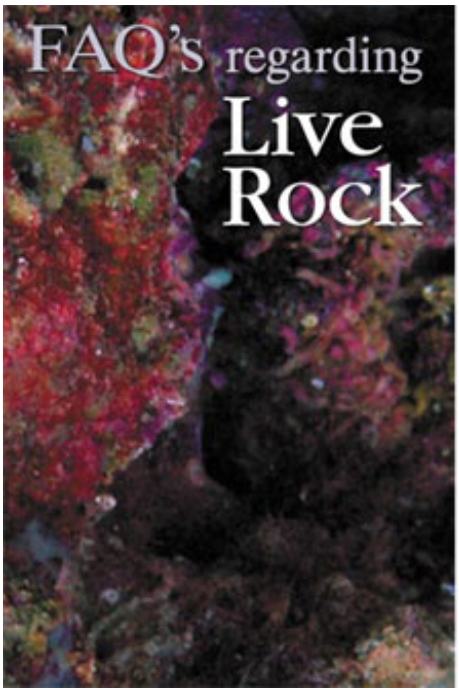
Drs. Foster & Smith Educational Staff



What is live rock?

Where does live rock come from?

What is curing?

Why cure live rock?

What is the difference between pre-cured and un-cured live rock?

Will curing decrease biological diversity on the live rock?

What happens if you do not cure live rock properly?

How do you know when live rock is properly cured and ready for placement in the aquarium?

What's so special about live rock available through LiveAquaria.com?

What is live rock?

Live rock is fragmented pieces of old coral reefs that broke off during storms or by wave action. These pieces then washed into shallower water where they were naturally colonized by marine life such as invertebrates, corals, sponges, and millions of beneficial nitrifying bacteria.

[Back to top]

Where does live rock come from?

Live rock can be found anywhere in the world's oceans where natural reefs occur. Live rock from different regions have slightly different characteristics including form, density, porosity, as well as the type of organisms that colonize them. However, all live rock is beneficial in providing supplemental biological filtration, increased biological diversity, structure, and shelter.

[Back to top]

What is curing?

Curing is a process designed to acclimate live rock to conditions found in home aquariums. Keep in mind that live rock is "alive" with an abundance of various marine plants and animals. Extensive filtration and large water changes help remove pollutants generated by organisms that did not survive the shipping process. In essence, curing is a hardening process that removes dead or decaying material so more resilient species can flourish.

[Back to top]

Why cure live rock?

Live rock must be properly cured to create a healthy aquatic environment. The biodiversity found on all transported live rock undergo some degree of natural die off, especially delicate or damaged fauna and flora. As these encrusting organisms go through this process, they produce a large amount of waste materials. Without proper curing, pollutants and toxic compounds such as ammonia are released into the water and compromise the health of your entire aquarium system. Therefore, the curing process usually takes place in a separate container and not in an established display

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aquarium.
[Back to top]

What is the difference between pre-cured and un-cured live rock?

The main difference between pre-cured live rock and uncured live rock is how they are handled once they have been collected. Pre-cured live rock is rock kept in special holding areas and sprayed with a constant mist of seawater. The spray drives out unwanted species such as bristle worms and mantis shrimp and dislodges loose organic debris. Uncured live rock is rock that has not been through this process. For this reason, uncured live rock tends to have a greater, initial biodiversity.
[Back to top]

Will curing decrease biological diversity on the live rock?

The degree of die off that occurs during curing will vary from case to case. However most of the beneficial bacteria deep within the pores and crevices of the live rock endure the curing process. Once established in the aquarium, resilient organisms including corals and invertebrates begin to re-emerge to reclaim the live rock over time. Reef supplements such as calcium, iodine, strontium, and trace elements can help encourage the development of encrusting organisms.
[Back to top]

What happens if you do not cure live rock properly?

If you prematurely add improperly cured rock to your aquarium it can harm, if not kill, existing tank inhabitants with toxic ammonia. Also, if proper aeration and temperature is not maintained during the curing process, you may experience excessive die-off. While this may reduce the initial appearance and effectiveness of the live rock as a biological filter, the biological diversity of the live rock will return as it establishes itself in the aquarium.
[Back to top]

How do you know when live rock is properly cured and ready for placement in the aquarium?

Depending on the curing method, most live rock will be fully cured in 1- 3 weeks. However, the most accurate way to determine if your live rock is properly cured is to test for ammonia and nitrite. When the water conditions stabilize and ammonia and nitrite test results are zero, then the rock is ready to be placed into your aquarium.
[Back to top]

What's so special about live rock available through LiveAquaria.com?

All live rock offered by LiveAquaria.com are quality pieces collected with the highest ethical standards. To preserve and maintain our precious ocean resource, live rock is removed passively from the ocean floor - not manually broken off of any live or existing reefs.
[Back to top]

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