Sun cup coral

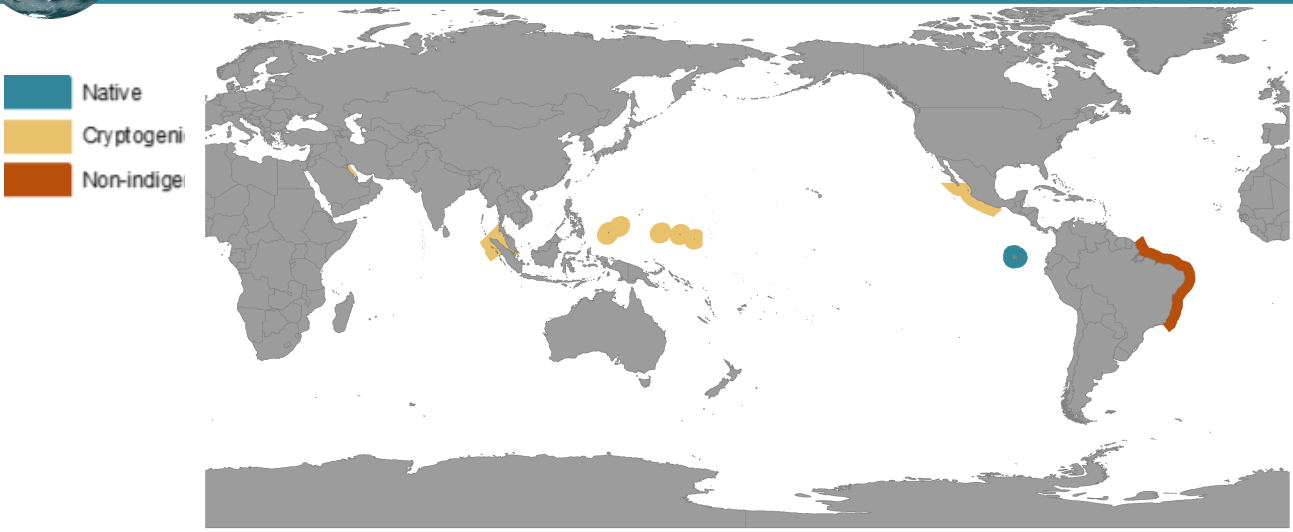
Tubastraea tagusensis Wells, 1982

KEY FEATURES

- Solitary coral polyp arising from a cylindrical cup-shaped calcareous base, averaging 8 mm diameter, forming spherical colonies
- Coral tentacles lemon yellow with spots, arising from a pale peach striated body
- Does not require any specific substrate to grow; will settle on natural substrata as well as artificial substrates including cement, steel and tiles. Found extensively on oil and gas rigs, drill ships and mono buoys which are thought to be the vectors responsible for its arrival in Brazil
- High tolerance to temperature variations and continues to reproduce when there is a lack of available food

PATHWAY

✓ ballast water ✓ biofouling



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IMPACTS

Environmental impacts	Human health impacts	Social & cultural impacts	Economic impacts
Contact with this coral can cause tissue necrosis in native corals and cause coral bleaching and algal turf growth on the affected areas. Mortality starts to occur 30 days after initial contact and increases significantly with time. A high reproductive output coupled with competitive ability could affect biodiversity in reef ecosystems	None known	Can alter local habitat used for food gathering	None known

ADDITIONAL DETAILS

- Reproduces sexually and asexually through the growth of polyps that form from fragments that go on to produce fully functioning corals
- Produces chemicals with antifouling properties and are deterrent to fish predators

DISTRIBUTION

Native range Galapagos Islands

Non-indigenous range Atlantic coast of South America, cryptogenic in Red Sea, Palau, Nicobar Islands

CREDITS AND REFERENCES (click reference for more information)

Images Top: Alexandre Ornella from ICMBio, bottom: Marcelo Kithara from A field guide to sun corals

References Carlos Junior et al (2015), Creed et al. (2017), Luz et al. (2018), Miranda et al. (2016), Zanotti et al. (2021)

SPREP Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme

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Pacific Invasive Species BATTLER

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