



# STINAPA INFORMATION

## ON BONAIRE YOU CAN FIND CORALS OF ALL SHAPES AND SIZES

When we talk about corals, usually we are referring to those kinds that secrete calcium carbonate to form a hard skeleton. The kind that builds reefs. These are actually miniscule and primitive animals that consist mainly of a cavity with an opening around which there are a few tentacles. Tentacles are small slithers of tissue that bring food to the animal itself. On one side they secrete calcium carbonate which builds the skeleton. Most of the corals that exist here are colony-forming. That means they form new polyps which are attached to the original one. This is called 'a-sexual reproduction'. Thousands of animals of less than a millimeter are attached to each other that way and form a big colony. Corals usually start their life-cycle as a very small creature that swims around until it finds a favorable spot. They eat miniature plants to grow to large corals. These plants, algae, need light. At greater depth there is no light so they can not exist there. That's why you will not find corals there. Unfortunately the variety of corals has been reduced, mainly due to climate changes. In the waters around Bonaire we can find almost forty different kinds of coral. They exist in many shapes and sizes; flat leaves or disks, with branches like a small tree, or in more solid forms as pillars or balls. Among the ball-shaped varieties we will find the kind that we call brain-coral (because the polyps live between hard ridges that make it look like a brain). With every variety the basic shape is more or less standard, but there can be small variations. The most important reason for this is light ! in shallow waters there is a lot of light, which is also reflected by the white sandy bottom. At greater depths, the light will only come from one direction, resulting in a flattening of the rounder types, and a turning of the leaves of others so that they will catch more sunlight. It is no wonder that almost all over the world they talk about the magnificent underwater park of Bonaire. That's because it almost seems to be a beautifully designed garden which was created with great care under the water's surface. Let's therefore make sure that we don't damage or destroy all this beauty. Because more so than with a regular garden, it takes a very long time to repair the damage once it's done.

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## NOS TA BIBA DI NATURALESA



**Traha huntu na un desaroyo duradero pa Boneiru**