Star Coral  (*Montastraea cavernosa*)

**Instant ID**
- Massive, dome-like collection of invertebrates (animals without a backbone)
- Puffy polyps (individual sections) look like stars during the day
- Grows up to five feet in diameter
- Wide range of possible colors including green, brown and orange

**Native Niches**
- Common on lower slopes of coral reefs
- Found in reefs throughout the Atlantic Ocean
- Primarily in the Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico, Florida, the Bahamas and Bermuda
Star Coral  \textit{(Montastraea cavernosa)}

**Favorite Foods**
- Gets nourishment from symbiotic (living together and benefiting each other) algae living in their tissues
- Catch tiny floating animals called zooplankton

**Critter Characteristics**
- Thousands of tiny animals called polyps form colonies
- Can survive in water up to 275 feet deep
- Other names include false knob coral and great star coral
- Sticky tentacles come out at night to catch food

**Population Protection**
- Impacted by black band disease, white plague and bleaching
- Learn more at https://FloridasCoralReef.org