

SPONGES

# Stromatoporoids

Domain	Eukaryota
Kingdom	Animalia
Phylum	Porifera
Clade	Stromatoporoidea

460 MYA – PRESENT

Stromatoporoids (not to be confused with stromatolites) are a peculiar group of marine organisms belonging to the phylum Porifera—sponges.

Stromatoporoids have a massive, layered, calcium carbonate skeleton with the inner and outer layers of an organism's skeleton connected by small pillars.

## Fossil Record

Stromatoporoids fall into two groups. The first, which appeared in the early Ordovician and apparently became extinct in the early Carboniferous. These stromatoporoids were major reef-building organisms through most of the Paleozoic.

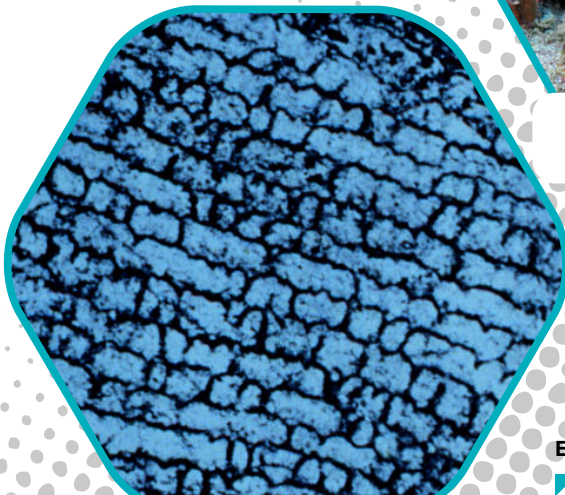
The second group appeared during the Triassic and were common until the Cretaceous, and were also a prominent reef-building organism during that time.

## Habitat and Lifestyle

Stromatoporoids filter food particles out of the water, by creating currents that pass through the organism. They do this by subtly moving.



Yellow tube sponge, *Aplysina fistularis*. Grand Cayman – Cayman Island. Image from Global\_Pics, iStock.



A slice of the stromatoporoid *Clathrodictyon striatellum*, Silurian (about 420 million years old), Ukraine. Image from Barry Webby, Macquarie University.

## DID YOU KNOW

Stromatoporoids were thought to have become extinct at the end of the Cretaceous, 66 million years ago, but recently have been rediscovered living in the Indian Ocean!



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