

New distributional range of the soft coral *Cladiella australis* in the Palk Bay Sea.



Live colony

During one of the field trips undertaken by Scuba diving in the nearshore waters off Thankachimadam near Villundy in the Palk Bay Sea for the qualitative evidence of the inhabitant species of soft corals, a species resembling *Sinularia* was brought for culturing in the hatchery. Subsequent studies through microphotographs and the access of suitable literature proved it to be yet another species under the genus *Cladiella*. The species *Cladiella*

australis (Mactadyen, 1936) is a new distributional record of soft coral from the reef area of 3-5 m depth though it is reported earlier from the island ecosystem of Little Andamans.

Cladiella australis (Mactadyen, 1936)

Common name: Colt coral small, blushing coral, blanching soft coral.

The colony in live condition is beautifully coloured chocolate brown and



Cladiella australis (Macadyen, 1936)

is encrusted with broad and low stalk. When disturbed the live coral will reduce its biomass and instantaneously change into lavender-violet with the rapid retraction of polyps. The colony looks pinkish white with polyps as dark dots just after alcohol preservation.

Published informations show that extracts from *Cladiella australis* are capable of inhibiting human oral carcinoma cells.

(*Marine Biodiversity Division*)