

# CACTUS CARE TIPS FOR SEEDS/PLANTS

## PLANTING YOUR SEEDS

With a little patience and effort, you should have no problem raising beautiful cacti from the seeds you received. Please remember that the seeds will sprout over a period of time, so don't be disappointed when only a few first start to sprout. The others will arrive given time. Usually most of the seeds will sprout between 3-10 weeks. ( Note that cacti seeds can sometimes wait until next season to germinate, so keep seed in trays for at least 12 months before deciding they will not germinate ).

Bottom heat will give faster results, but is not an absolute necessity. If you can provide bottom heat, then by all means do so. If you cannot, then use shallow containers that can be covered with glass or plastic. The containers should be large enough to allow for 2 inches of crushed gravel or sharp sand (aquarium sand will do fine) to facilitate drainage. On top of the sand or gravel, you will need to place about 2 inches of sterilized soil. I recommend a mixture of 1 part sharp sand and 1 part peat humus. It is very important that the soil is sterilized. Heating soil in an oven at 200 degrees for 15 minutes is a good way to assure it is properly sterilized.

Soak the soil with water mixed with fungicide. This will prevent damping off later on. Allow excess water to drain off. Press seeds lightly into soil and cover with about 1/8 inch of soil. Cover with glass or plastic and place in warm location. Keep soil damp but not wet. I suggest misting the surface regularly.

After the seeds have begun to sprout, leave the glass or plastic in place. Leave on for about two weeks. In the meantime make sure the container does not receive direct sunlight as this may kill the plants. When the cover is removed, make sure that the plants do not receive any strong drafts or sudden temperature changes. It will take a couple of days for the seedlings to become hardy.

## CARING FOR YOUR PLANTS.

A few tips on caring for your new plants:

Never use tap water or alkaline water. Rainwater is best but tap water that has set in an open container for 2 days will be fine.

Cacti cannot tolerate high alkaline soil. Check your soil for ph if you have problems with cacti.

Use fungicide mixed in with your water often when watering.

Use very weak solutions of plant food when feeding. Too much fertilize will distort your plants.

Never expose young seedlings to direct sunlight. They need bright, diffused sunlight.

The quickest way to kill a cacti is overwatering it. Let soil dry out before rewatering.

Cacti are susceptible to aphids, mealy bugs, white flies and spider mites. Treat soil with systemic insecticides and add paradichlorobenzene crystals to soil if possible.

If a plant show signs of rot due to overwatering, cut out the affected part immediately. If the top of the plant is cut off, let it air dry for a few days then repot. Often it will reroot itself.

Brown scarring is often a sign of too much sunlight. Move plants to a more protected location.

If possible, let plants spend first winter in original planter the seeds were sowed in. If overcrowding will not allow this, try to disturb the roots as little as possible.

If you have problems you don't understand, then please do not hesitate to write me.