



A Beginner's Guide to Cactus and Succulent Care

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Cacti and Succulents are typically native to areas where the soil is dry and rainfall is low/infrequent. They have adapted to these conditions by storing water inside the plant. Cacti traditionally have spines making them rough to the touch, while succulents are typically soft, thick, and fleshy. Even though they may look different their overall care is quite similar, so here are a few tips if you are just starting out.

Handle Carefully – Many cacti have spines that can hurt you and are difficult to remove, so always handle them with gloves. You can also use thick paper to wrap around the spiny part when necessary for repotting or moving. Succulents are most often soft to the touch but can be delicate, so handle them with care to avoid damage or breakage. If you do break it, don't worry. Most succulents will regenerate from that point and the broken portion can be propagated to start a new plant. Make sure to look up the proper propagation technique for your specific succulent, as it can differ from type to type.

Select the Right Pot – The best style of pot is small and shallow, especially for cacti because they grow so slowly and prefer to dry out quickly after watering. Succulents grow a little more quickly so give them just a little more room to root out. A pot no more than one inch larger in diameter than its current pot is best. A pot of any material will work, but one with the ability to drain excess water is preferred. Like with any potted plant, planting it in too big of a pot or re-potting it before it is needed can make it far too easy to over-water it. If you find a pot you love that doesn't have drainage, you can always keep it in a plastic pot and drop it down into the decorative pot you like. If your plant is planted directly into a pot that has no drainage, that's ok, just make sure to water carefully (see below).

Use the Right Soil – Most cacti and succulents do not need to be repotted very often, but when they do you want to select a potting soil that is specifically designed for cacti and succulents, or at least one that has no moisture retention components. Not all potting soils are created equal and you should never use ground soil in pots. At The Plant Kingdom, we make our own cactus and succulent soil in-house. The recipe for our soil mix was created by and named after one of our former team members who had a passion for succulents, Dr. Paul. If you need a larger amount, we also sell the components of our blend as well as Barky Beaver Potting Soil, which is very well draining and great for cacti, succulents, and many other types of potted plants.

Let the Light Shine– Cacti and succulents like lots of natural light. If you want to put them permanently in an area with medium to low light, you will need to supplement them with grow lights. You can also rotate plants in a lower light spot by buying two of the same and rotating them every three weeks. Three weeks in the lower light spot and three weeks in a high light spot. Don't want to rotate or worry about grow lights? Try succulent-like plants, like sansevieria and ZZ Aroids. Like true succulents, they prefer a drier environment, but they can also handle lower light.

Don't Over-Water – If your pot has drainage and adequate light you will water about every 3-4 weeks, but every plant and environment can be different so it is important to know what specific plant you have and get to know your plant's environment before you rely on a specific routine. The key is to always make sure the soil dries out in between watering. If your plant is planted directly into a pot that has no drainage, give the plant less quantity of water at one time, only enough to wet the top of the soil. This may require you to water more frequently. If you want to summer your cacti and succulents outside, they would love it, just make sure that you protect them from heavy rains. Plants in pots with no drainage should not be placed outside unless under cover to prevent drowning.

Overall, cacti and succulents are great, low-maintenance plants and are very rewarding to grow. If you have additional questions about caring for your cacti or succulents, feel free to send an email to our plant experts at gardeninfo@plantkingdom.net. Happy Planting!