

SPRIT OF GARDENING

Cacti and Succulents

CACTI + SUCCULENTS

Cactus belongs to a specific family of plants but the species within that family can come from very different habitats. From dry desserts to mountain ranges cacti are versatile plants.

Succulents is a non-scientific term and basically can refer to any plants with fleshy parts that are adapted to store moisture in times of drought.

WATERING + FERTILIZING

While the plants are in a growth period they will need more water. Plants should be watered once a week, giving the soil a good soaking so water drains out of the bottom. Let the soil dry out completely before watering again. During the growing season a balanced fertilizer can be used but diluted to 1/4 strength.

While the plants go into dormancy they will use less water and require no fertilizer. Extend the time between waterings. Pay attention to the plant and its soil to determine if it needs more or less water.

GROWTH PERIODS

For most cactus and succulents the growth period is from spring to fall. During this time the plant will put effort into new growth and maybe even flowering. After fall the plant will go into a dormancy period where it will grow a little or not even at all.

LIGHT

Most cacti and succulents like bright light but not all can tolerate intense direct sunlight especially with hot temperatures.

Too much light: if the plant is looking faded out it may be receiving too much light. If your plant is moved suddenly into very bright sunlight conditions, or if the weather suddenly turns hot with abundant sunshine, your plant can scorch. This can happen rapidly and can scar the plant for the rest of its life.

Too little light: If your plant is receiving too little light, it might appear to really reach for the light source. Your plant will suffer if left in such light conditions for very long. When transitioning such a plant to stronger light, keep in mind that it will be especially prone to scorching, so make the transition slowly

PESTS

These are some common pests that usually bother cacti and succulents.

Mealy Bugs

Spider mites

Scale

Fungus gnats