



Cacti and other succulents have the same needs and preferences as many other living things. In some ways, they're not so different from us:

They like plenty of natural light.

Watering is good for them but they don't like sitting in cold water, especially in the colder months.

They don't mind being in the sun and the heat, but a cool breeze is a must if they're not going to bake.

They take a little while to mature and flower, and their diets will change as they get older.

They like a pot that meets their needs: not too big and not too small.

They respond well to a little care, attention and respect if they're to grow into healthy, well-balanced adults.

You get what you give.

This little guide is designed to give you a good start in building a healthy, mutually beneficial relationship with your cacti and other succulents. Further research is always beneficial, and we're always happy to help with advice. Either pop in and see us at the shop, send us a message or email, or give us a call.

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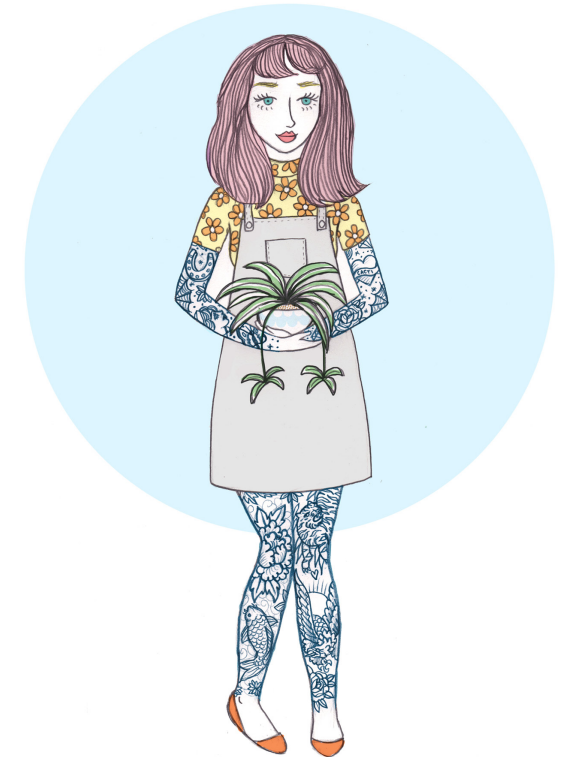
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# CARING FOR YOUR CACTI AND OTHER SUCCULENTS



# SPIDERPLANT

NATURE'S HOUSEMATES

# HOW TO CARE FOR YOUR NEW HOUSEPLANT

## LIGHT

Cacti and other succulents thrive best in plenty of light all year round. Give them as much natural daylight as possible. Ideally, your plant will like a south facing window. However, as long as your succulents get some morning or afternoon sun during the day, they'll be fine.



## WATERING

Don't be afraid of watering your cactus. A quick spray won't be enough. If you can get it, your plant is particularly partial to rainwater as its slightly acidic.

From **March to September**, water it from the top (rather than sitting it in water, which could cause it to rot), then allow the excess water to drain off. Always allow the plant to dry out between waterings. Under warm conditions, you'll probably need to water once a week.

From **October to February**, your plant will require less watering - about half as much as during the warmer months - but follow the same procedure as above. During the colder months, water your plant in the morning. This allows any excess water to evaporate during the day so that the plant is dry during the night (they don't mind being a bit cold at night - just above 5°C - but they don't like being cold *and* wet at night. Who does?).



## TEMPERATURE

In a hot room it's all about air flow. Your plant can put up with high temperatures and full sun, but only if they've got some decent air flow around them. Basically, without air flow, they can effectively 'bake', so open a window or door to stop your succulent from stifling.



## FLOWERING

In the winter, cacti and other succulents like to rest. They're saving their energy to produce flowers in the spring and summer. You can help maintain this natural cycle with a few simple rules. Keep your plant cool and dry over this period, at around 5°C. Avoid keeping it near radiators and other heat sources. Also, do not 'over-pot' your plant, ie have too much space in the pot, or your plant will direct its energy towards growing to fill the pot rather than getting ready to flower. Flowers tend to occur in mature plants; two years and older. Be patient. It's worth the wait.



## POTTING

Cacti do not like to be over-potted. They're happiest in a pot that's just a little bigger than themselves. As a rule of thumb, you'll want to re-pot a cactus when its diameter starts to touch the side of the pot, or your plant has become too tall for the pot and is unstable, or the root system is so packed it's distorting the plastic pot in which it lives or roots are poking out of the bottom of the pot.

When you re-pot, only go up one pot size (this helps to encourage flowering). We recommend terracotta pots: they're porous, which allows the water to evaporate through the sides, so you're less likely to overwater them. Terracotta pots also let in air, benefitting the root system.

When re-potting, we recommend you use a ready-prepared cactus soil mix or John Innes No. 2. After your plant's first birthday, it's ready for more grown up food. You can use a special cactus liquid fertiliser or tomato fertiliser. Fertilise it every third watering from March to September. There is no need to fertilise your plant in the winter when it's resting.



## PESTS

Mealy bug is the most common pest affecting cacti and other succulents. This shows itself as white fluffy patches in the joints and between ribs, or sometimes in the growing point of your plant.

Mealy bug can be wiped off or even washed off with a pressure water spray (such as your shower), or you could use alcohol or methylated spirits, applied using a small paint brush. You could also spray the plant with an organic soap-based insecticide (though this should be tried on a small area of the plant first).

WE WISH YOU MANY HAPPY  
YEARS OF JOY AND  
FRIENDSHIP FROM YOUR  
PLANTS