



Cactus and Succulents

All of the plants in the Cactus family are Succulents, but all Succulents are not Cactus. Succulents are thousands of watery or fleshy plants, in contrast to woody types of plants, that through evolution have adapted themselves to resist or survive long periods of drought. They are found in many plant families, growing in all parts of the world. Most Cacti are native to the Americas. The “other succulents” are mostly found in Africa, though also in many other countries.

GENERAL BASIC SOIL for Cacti and Succulents:

1 pt. sand or fine gravel.

1 pt. leaf mold, Baccto, or similar plant mix.

1 pt. loose sandy loam topsoil.

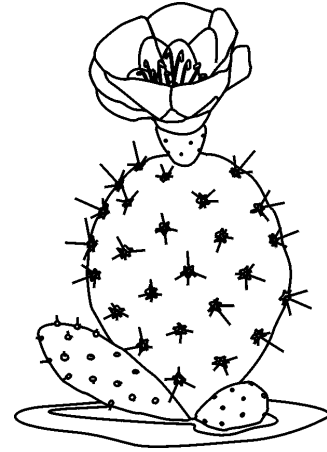
A small amount of bonemeal and charcoal added may prove beneficial.

ADVANCED MIX:

3 pt. sand

1 pt. Baccto, or similar plant mix.

This mix, along with a regular fertilizing program, will probably produce larger plants for the advanced grower. The main requirement of the soil, for all Succulents, is that it shall be porous, and drain well. Sun and air are as important as soil conditions. Most Succulents are sun loving and are accustomed to long periods of dry heat. While they need plenty of light, not all enjoy full exposure to burning sun.



WATERING: Potted succulents may be watered more often throughout the summer months. After which, for winter, they should be lightly watered each month to keep the roots from drying out. Most succulents must have their rest period, usually from October to March, when they need to be kept in a drier condition, and at about 40-50 degrees.

PROPAGATION: Cacti and other Succulents may be propagated from seed, offsets, or cuttings. Offsets can be removed from older plants and be planted immediately. Cuttings are best taken in spring or summer. Cactus cuttings should be “healed” in a dry shady place, until it has calloused. Root the cutting by planting shallowly in a clean, slightly damp mix of sand and charcoal. After roots form they may be planted in regular basic mix.

SEED: Culture is best in late spring and summer. A shallow container with drain holes in bottom is used. Use 1" of coarse washed pebbles, that have been boiled, in bottom. Then fill to within 1" of top with a sterilized mix of 5 parts sand (sifted and cleaned), 2 parts fine soil, 1 part charcoal. Press down lightly, after placing seeds on top, place container in a larger vessel with warm water. The soil will be dampened by capillary action. Put a very small amount of fine sand over the seeds and cover with glass, or plastic. Temperature should be 70 to 95 degrees, The soil mix will take care of the seedlings for at least a year. after which they may be replanted into the basic mix. Fertilizer may be applied in spring and summer; any general fertilizer may be used.

STERILIZING: Sterilizing of soil may be done by baking in the oven. Dampen the Mix and bake for 2 hours at 180 degrees.

Healthy Cactus and Succulents, carefully grown, are a joy to any cactus grower, and in variety, form, and color, are far more interesting than most other plants.

Happy growing.