

# Problems & Solutions

## Shrivelled stem or leaves

Check the growing medium. If it is too dry the cause is very likely to be under watering. Water immediately and adjust the frequency of future waterings.

## White 'threads' on leaves

### White fluffy insects in plant crevices

These are most likely mealybugs. Remove with a cotton bud dipped in methylated spirit and wipe the leaves or stem clean regularly to prevent an infestation (assuming there are no spines in the way). Additionally, spray with **SB Plant Invigorator** following the instructions on the label. After the first signs spray at least twice a week for two weeks to kill off any remaining insects.

## Brown or mushy parts

This is most likely due to excess water. Cacti and succulents need to dry between waterings, and to receive plenty of sun light. Too much water makes the tissue soft and easily attacked by fungi (most commonly *Botrytis cinerea*).

If the rot is at the bottom there may be little that can be done to save the plant, but if the roots are not damaged you could simply slice off the infection, use sulphur powder as a fungicide, and replant after a couple of days.



## SB Plant Invigorator

A unique 3-in-one pesticide, mildewcide and foliar feed for all plants. Controls mealybug, spider mite, aphids, whitefly.

Suitable for use throughout the year – no harvest interval for edible crops.

Safe to use in the home.

# Special 'cacti'

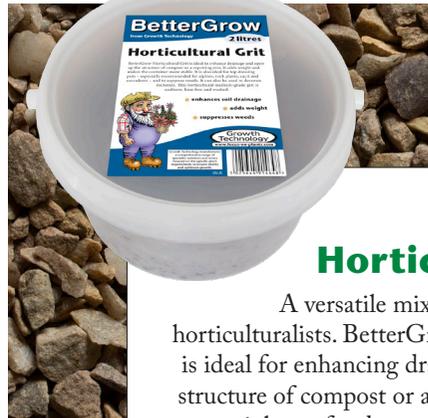
The Christmas cactus, the Easter cactus and orchid cacti require different care to the more common cacti and succulents. They originate from a very different habitat, the shaded areas of the tropical forests of North and South America, and they are epiphytes, i.e. they grow on the surfaces of other plants.

They require partial shade and a substrate with added organic matter but with good drainage. In terms of temperature they are cool growing. Keep them away from radiators and spray regularly with soft water or **Houseplant Myst**, or place them on a humidity tray.



## Houseplant Myst

Complete care for houseplants. Suitable for cacti, succulents, anthuriums, ferns, ficus, dracaenas, palms etc.



## BetterGrow Horticultural Grit

A versatile mixing ingredient used by horticulturalists. BetterGrow Horticultural Grit is ideal for enhancing drainage, opening up the structure of compost or a repotting mix, adding weight, or for decorating the top of the pot.

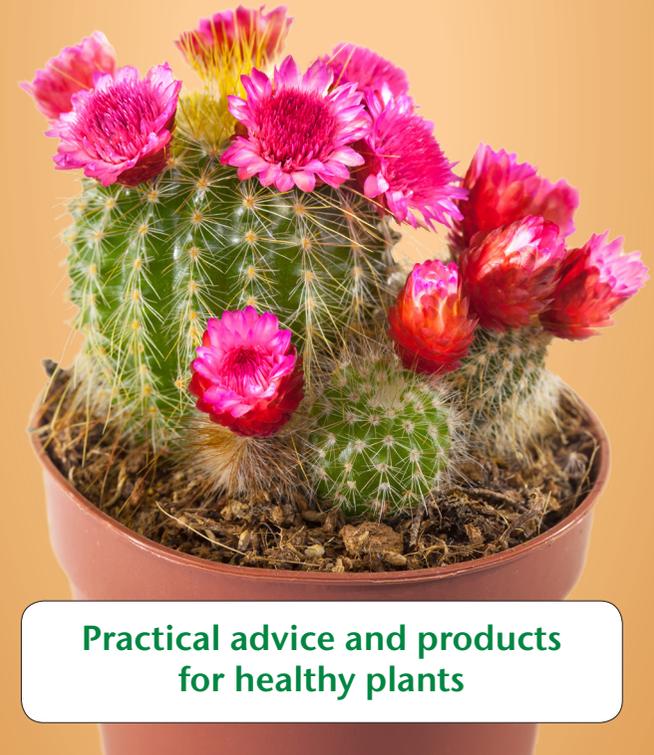
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# Making the Most of Your Cacti and Succulents



Practical advice and products for healthy plants

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# Caring for cacti and succulents

Most cacti and succulents come from dry areas such as steppes and desert. High temperatures and low rainfall force plants to collect and store water to survive long dry periods. They are very adaptable houseplants and will thrive in a range of indoor conditions. In fact, they are very difficult to kill, and if properly potted they require little maintenance to thrive. Additionally, some cacti and succulents bear extraordinarily beautiful flowers.

## Temperature

Cacti and succulents need warm temperatures and bright conditions for growth and flowering. Prolonged periods of low temperatures can lead to fungal diseases and stunted growth so they should be placed in the warmest and sunniest part of the house.

## Light

Bright conditions are required – these are among the few plants that can thrive on a south facing windowsill all year round. In the middle of the summer, however, light through a window may result in scorching so check regularly and move around if you notice any scorching from too much light. East or west facing windows can be good enough, too.

## Humidity

In their natural environment cacti and succulents absorb nutrients and water from dew or mist so they will benefit from regular misting with water, or especially **Houseplant Myst** which provides nutrients at the same time. The best time to mist a cactus or succulent is in the morning. Avoid misting in cold weather during the winter.

## Watering

Although they can withstand long periods of drought, cacti and

succulents will need regular watering especially during the growing season. Allow the top part of the growing medium to dry between waterings, but not too much as this will inhibit growth. Water from the top of the pot. Regular watering is especially important during flowering to prevent premature drying of the flowers.



## Feeding

Cacti and succulents will respond to regular feeding which will promote healthy growth and flowering. Use a fertiliser specifically formulated for cacti and succulents, such as **Cactus & Succulent Focus**, at the recommended rate with every other watering during the growing season and occasionally during the winter.

Alternatively, for a simple and convenient way to feed plants you can use a **Cactus & Succulent Focus**

**Drip Feeder** throughout the year.

## Flowering

Most cacti and succulents will flower once a year – in response to high temperatures and bright conditions (Christmas cactus is an exception and will flower in response to short days and lower temperatures). Unfortunately, the house environment is not warm and bright enough to enable some species to flower.

# Propagation

The leaves of many succulents such as Echeveria, Haworthia, Sedum and others may be used to generate new plants. Take off a young leaf and allow it to callus for a week or so. Place the end into gritty medium and keep it away from direct sunlight. Water sparingly and repot when a root system has developed.

# Repotting

Cacti and succulents need repotting every 24–36 months, or if the condition of the old soil is poor. For best results plants should be repotted early in the year, just before the new spring growth starts, but they can be repotted at any time in the summer. If not repotting, it is a good practice to replace the top part of the growing medium (without removing any roots) with fresh medium every year.

When repotting cacti or succulents it is important to use a pot with an adequate number of drainage holes and a free-draining growing medium specifically for cacti and succulents such as **Cactus & Succulent Focus Repotting Mix** which contains a large proportion of sand, grit and soil.

## Instructions:

Rework the new repotting mix so it regains its texture. Repot the plant when the substrate is dry. Carefully ease the plant from the old container, using a pair of gloves or a large piece of cloth if the cactus has spines. Loosen the root ball, breaking away any loose soil. Remove all the soil that you easily can. Add a layer of moist new repotting mix to the bottom of the new container. Hold the plant in place and work the mix well in between the roots.

Add repotting mix until it fills the container to just below the rim. Wait for a week before watering, to allow any damaged roots to heal. Add **Root Ultra** to the water for the first couple of months to improve rooting and minimize any shock to the plants. Keep in the shade for a further two weeks to allow the plant to recover. Start feeding with a specialist fertiliser such as **Cactus & Succulent Focus** six weeks after repotting – this will encourage healthy growth and flowering.

