

# Special 'cacti'

The Christmas cactus, the Easter cactus and orchid cacti require different care as they are epiphytes, i.e. they grow on the surfaces of other plants. They are cool growing and require partial shade. They are best repotted in Houseplant Focus Repotting Mix. Keep them away from radiators and spray regularly with soft water or **Houseplant Myst**.



## Terrariums - A Beginner's Guide

Cacti and succulents are highly suitable for terrariums – easy to make and easy to look after.

This is a detailed, step-by-step guide on how to make your own unique terrarium, or how to buy one wisely – the result of experience, continuous experimentation and extensive research. It communicates all the necessary information in a way which is easy to understand, with over 90 purpose-taken pictures and plenty of inspiration and ideas. The only book you need to create and maintain your own piece of horticultural art.



## Root Ultra

The ultimate root promoter. **Root Ultra** promotes strong, vigorous, healthy rooting and minimises transplant shock. It is a complex blend of pure organic plant extracts, seaweed and vitamins that ensures the plant thrives in the new environment.

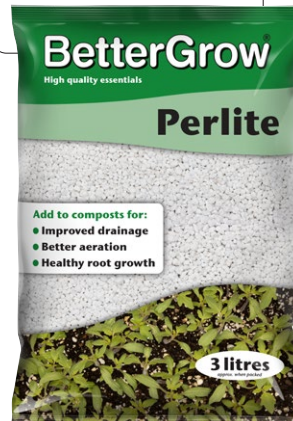


## Decorative Grit

The perfect top dressing for cacti and succulents.

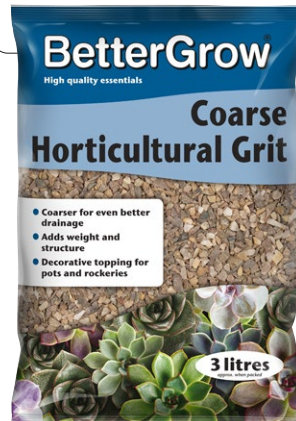
## BetterGrow Perlite

Coarse-grade perlite for improved soil drainage, aeration and root growth.



## BetterGrow Horticultural Grit

For improved drainage or as decorative top dressing for cacti and succulents.



## Other products from Growth Technology



## The Growth Technology Promise

We are a British family business, making advanced, specialist products for thriving houseplants. We use the best quality ingredients to ensure the best results every time – no short cuts, no compromises. For all our products we consider first and foremost the plant's needs, sustainability for our environment, and value and convenience for the customer.

*If you love your plants, give them everything.  
Give them Focus.*



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Please take one



# Making the Most of Your Cacti and Succulents

By **Dr Manos Kanellos**,  
plant physiologist and author



Practical advice and products  
for healthy plants

[www.focus-on-plants.com](http://www.focus-on-plants.com)



# 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.

## Watering

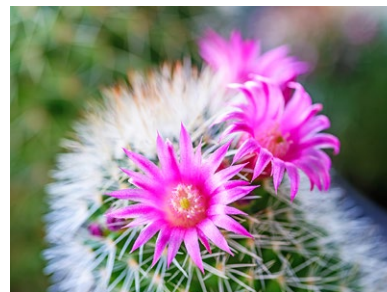
Although they can withstand long periods of drought, cacti and succulents will need regular watering especially during the growing season. Allow the top part of the growing medium to dry between waterings, but not too much as this will inhibit growth. Water from the top of the pot. Regular watering is 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** or, if you prefer, **Organic Cactus & Succulent Focus**. Use 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. Placing plants in a suitable location outside for the summer months (no direct sunlight) will encourage abundant flowering.

# 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 report 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 is it 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. Cacti and succulents should always be planted to the level they were in their previous pot, as burying them in the compost runs the risk of diseases. 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 minimise 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.



# 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, or 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 every four days at least four times, 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 sunlight. 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.