



Aylett Nurseries
The Complete Garden Centre

Cacti & Succulents

Information Leaflet No.



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The Cacti are a vast and varied family of plants, best recognised for their distinctive and unusual appearance. Their physical features mean they are extremely tolerant to arid and hot environments. Their stems have expanded into green succulent structures containing the chlorophyll necessary for life and growth, while the leaves have become the spines for which cacti are so well known. Much like many other plants that have waxy coatings on their leaves, Cacti often have a waxy coating on their stems to prevent water loss. In a desert environment this waxy coating works by preventing water from spreading on the surface and allowing water to trickle down the stem to be absorbed by the roots and used for photosynthesis. Cacti have a thick, fleshy, hard-walled, succulent stem – when it rains, or when watered, water is stored in the stem. Cacti produce large flowers and like the spines and branches arise from areoles.

Succulents *are water - retaining plants adapted to arid climate or soil conditions - the storage of water often gives succulent plants a more swollen or fleshy appearance than other plants.*

Areoles *give rise to spines or, on certain cacti, small, detachable glochids, The areoles on cacti are clearly visible. They generally appear as small light to dark colored bumps, out of which grow clusters of spines.*

Glochids *are tiny, almost invisible barbed hairs that easily detach from the plant and become lodged in the skin, causing irritation upon contact; with the tufts that cover some species, each tuft contains hundreds of tiny barbs which are an additional form of protection.*

Their basic requirements are outlined below, together with some suggested varieties;

Temperature: They will tolerate any amount of heat in summer. In winter they should be kept cool, but not below 40 - 45°F (5 – 7°C).

Light: All cacti need good light. They will do best on a windowsill in full sunlight.

Water: Water frequently in summer and once a month in winter.

Feeding: Feed every 14 days in summer with cacti / succulent feed or high potash feed.

Humidity: Not necessary, they prefer hot dry conditions.

Repotting: Use a suitable cacti compost and only re-pot when absolutely necessary.

Suggested varieties include: Crassulas, Aloes, Euphorbia, Cereus, Echinocactus, Mammillaria and Opuntia.

**This leaflet is available
in alternative formats**

Please ask a member of staff or

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