

The Top 3 Mistakes People Make When Growing Cacti: How To Avoid Them To Help Your Cactus Thrive



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Congratulations for downloading this special report from the producers of the DVD, *Captivating Cacti*. As someone who wants to take care of your cacti, you are most undoubtedly intrigued by this species of plant as we are. For the cacti aficionado, cacti are truly one of the most unique families of plants. Those who become captivated by them usually take them up as a hobby. Did you know there are over 2,000 species of cacti that we have classified? There are so many reasons why they make perfect plants for everyone from beginners without green thumbs to avid gardeners.

Cacti are perennial, so you can enjoy them year round. They make excellent container plants and therefore can be grown inside and in environments they are not found in naturally. They are also easy to grow and maintain.

The environment you grow your cacti in will no doubt be different from their native environment, but most are very adaptable and do well without special growing conditions.

Their unique characteristics and features have enabled them to flourish in some of the harshest and most hostile environments on Earth. So one may think that they are very resilient, and for the most part they are. However, they are still vulnerable to pest and disease problems and will remain healthy with good horticultural practices.

Successfully growing cacti, as with all plants, involves three very important variables; soil, water and light. People make mistakes with all of these variables.

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Here are the top three mistakes most people make followed by advice on how to avoid them.

Mistake # 1

Planting Your Cactus In Regular Potting Mix

The golden rule for successfully growing cacti is that they must have *well drained soil*. Many generic commercial potting mixes alone do not offer the right combination of ingredients to ensure adequate drainage.

What should you do?

Plant your cactus in a mix that is made of peat, bark, perlite, pumice or sand. The peat is used for water absorption. The bark, perlite, pumice or sand gives the soil mix good drainage and aeration. Look for special cactus or succulent mixes with these ingredients. You can find these mixes at any nursery or plant and garden center.

You can also make your own potting mix. A really easy mix to make is combining regular houseplant potting mix with 50% perlite or pumice. Perlite and pumice can also be found at nurseries and garden centers.

This mixture is good for desert cacti. If you have a jungle cactus, look for an orchid mix or a commercial mix specifically for these types of plants.

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Soil is important whether you are potting your plant in a landscape or a pot. Since growing conditions vary with these two environments, you may have to experiment until you find the best combination of soil ingredients, type of container and landscape placement for your plant.

If you want to learn more on this subject, it is covered in our DVD, *Those Captivating Cacti* available at <http://captivatingcacti.com>

Mistake # 2

Planting or Keeping Your Cactus In Full Sun

Now this advice may go against what you think about cacti and their natural environment. True, there are some species that grow in the blazing sun of the desert, but if you aren't keeping those specific cacti in those specific conditions, your cacti will more likely prefer bright or filtered light so they can maintain their healthy color and shape. The type of light will depend on the type of cacti. So you need to do some research on the native growing conditions of your specific cacti.

What should you do?

Cacti do best when given light similar to their native habitat. A jungle cactus for example needs less light than a desert cactus. Many cacti can get sunburned in strong, direct sunlight.

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There are slight differences to consider when caring for indoor or outdoor cactus plants. If you have an indoor plant, give it plenty of bright light by placing it in a south-facing window. Avoid serious hot direct sunlight, which can sunburn the plant. A window screen can soften the intense sun.

Cacti planted in the ground can handle more direct light. However, it is always best to acclimate plants slowly to full sun if they have been kept in shady conditions.

If in doubt about your plant's light requirements, refer to a reference book, search the Internet or ask other cacti enthusiasts.

Mistake # 3

Over-Watering

The key to caring for your cactus when it comes to watering isn't to avoid watering in order to simulate a dry native environment, but rather to never *over water*.

What should you do?

The best rule of watering, no matter if you have a cactus in a pot indoors or in a sunny spot in your garden, is only water when the soil is starting to dry out.

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Look at the soil and test the soil condition with your finger. If the soil is too moist, your cactus can develop rot. This is a common error beginning cactus gardeners make. If in doubt, err on the side of under-watering. Correct watering for all growing conditions are explored in more depth in the DVD, *Those Captivating Cacti*.

Growing your own cacti can be a tremendously rewarding experience requiring minimal effort. Through experimenting, you will discover a growing environment that works best for your situation.

Once you determine the best soil, water, and light arrangement for your location, your cacti will flourish, surprising and delighting you with their unique range of features, flowers, and unusual growth forms.

There is an abundance of excellent resources about cacti available on the Internet, in books, from the Cactus and Succulent Society of America, on our website <http://captivatingcacti.com> and now from our newly released DVD, *Those Captivating Cacti*.

In this video, you're shown a very wide range of interesting cacti and will learn about the best mixes for cactus soil and growing media, water, culture, light requirements and propagation techniques to keep your cactus collection flourishing. You'll learn about growing from seed, stem and leaf cuttings and grafting. If you've been looking for a DVD that covers this information, then look no further. You will not find something similar out there; we produced this DVD for that very reason.

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Those Captivating Cacti was filmed at some of the largest wholesale and best retail cacti nurseries in the country, as well as at the Huntington Library and Botanical Gardens, The Getty and other locations for truly inspirational images. This program is a visual treat as well as a treasure trove of information. It is only available at our site, <http://captivatingcacti.com>.

Meet The People Behind The Videos

Those Captivating Cacti and its companion DVD, *Success With Succulents*, was produced by Panorama Studios, located in Cambria, California.

Rick Smith is the producer and director of photography for these videos. Prior to founding Panorama Studios in 1997, Rick was director of Visual Education Productions (VEP) at California Polytechnic State University in San Luis Obispo, California. This award-winning multimedia department was recognized internationally as one of the premiere producers of instructional materials for agricultural and horticultural education. Rick has overseen production of hundreds of instructional videos, books, films, CD-ROMs, slide sets and more.

Kim Miller supervised script development on both of these projects and was production manager, editor and DVD author. Kim has worked professionally in media production for over 10 years.

Dan Lassanske was an advisor on both programs and oversaw production of *Success With Succulents*. He is a professor of horticulture at California Polytechnic State University. He currently teaches courses in Retailing

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Horticultural Products, Nursery Production and Environmental Horticulture. He is active with the California Association of Nurseries and Garden Centers, and serves on various committees. He has been the recipient of Cal Poly's Meritorious Teaching Award, the Petoseed Agricultural Faculty Award, and the Advisor of the Year Award. Mr. Lassanske's professional consulting includes working with garden centers on personnel management and marketing strategies. In addition, he has an interest in the seed industry, perennial and bedding plant production. He continues to be a co-coach for the Associated Landscape Contractors of America student competition team which wins first place nationally on a regular basis.

Rob Skillin is a dedicated cactus collector and propagator. He has traveled the world collecting and photographing cacti. Rob is a board member of the Cactus and Succulent Society of America and is an active member in the Central Coast Cactus & Succulent Society.

Rob contributes to publications, gives presentations and generally promotes the joy of collecting and propagating cacti for personal satisfaction. He is a sought after speaker at cacti and succulent club meetings. Rob arranged many of the shooting locations for *Those Captivating Cacti*, advised on the script and provided access to his extensive collection.

There are also versions of these two programs designed for schools and clubs. They include Public Performance Rights, a teaching guide and transcripts of the

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narration. You can learn more about these versions by going to

<http://crazyaboutcacti.com>.