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Cactus
Care Instructions

LIGHT: Most cactus prefer bright light but this can vary by species. Start with direct to bright light and evaluate whether the plant remains “normal” looking. Signs of stress such as going off-color or looking bleached may indicate that the plant needs to be moved to an area with less light (or that it is being overwatered). If the plant starts to look as though it is excessively bending to the light, move it to a brighter spot. Try not to make drastic changes in light conditions. You may have to transition the plant over a week or two when moving it. Rotate the plant one-quarter turn per week to keep it from leaning to the light.

WATERING: Between mid to late spring and mid fall, water about once a week. Soak the soil thoroughly and allow the water to drain out of the pot. If the pot is kept in a saucer, discard excess water that remains in the saucer after about 15 minutes. From fall to late winter, reduce watering allowing the potting mix to dry out between watering. Do not use softened water on cactus.

FERTILIZER: Feed your cactus with Bonide Liquid Cactus Plant Food every time you water during the growing season or use a fertilizer labeled for cactus and follow the label directions. From fall to late winter, do not fertilize cactus.

POTS and POTTING: Most materials (plastic, clay, etc) are fine for cactus and can be used based on preference. Clay and ceramic pots can provide helpful weight to counterbalance cactus that tend to be top-heavy. Plants in plastic and glazed pots may require less watering than those in unglazed terra cotta. All pots MUST have drainage holes to allow for good drainage. For potting mix use a mix that is labeled for cactus which will ensure that the mix does not retain too much water. When you see build-up of white deposits on the side of the pot, or on top of the soil, it is a good time to re-pot your plant in fresh soil. It is best to do this in spring or summer. If reusing the pot, scrub off the mineral deposits before re-potting. If the plant looks like it is starting to outgrow its pot, re-pot it into a pot that is the next size up (about 2” larger than the existing pot). We suggest wearing leather gloves or using wadded up paper towels or a tea towel when handling cactus to avoid injury. Depending on size, you can also use tongs to handle the plant.

TROUBLESHOOTING:

Mealy bugs, spider mites, and scale are not unusual pest insects on cacti. Dab mealy bugs with a rubbing alcohol soaked Q-tip and treated with systemic insecticide. Spider mites can be misted and treated with Mite-X. Treat scale with systemic insecticide.



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