your new prickly friend

How to care for your cactus

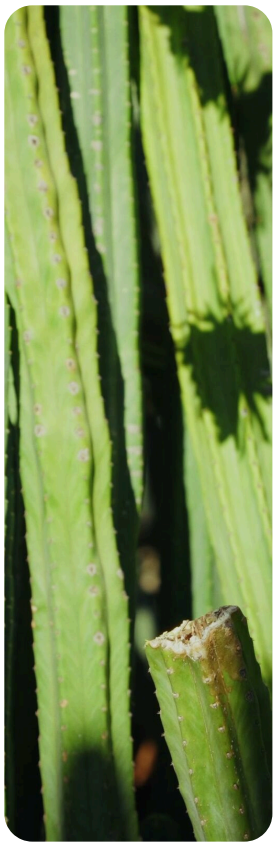
Everything we've learned in over 40 years of growing, minus the ones we killed along the way.



Fresh out of the post

Cuttings are tough, but a trip through the mail can knock them around. If yours looks a little unhappy, don't panic. Here's what we'd do.

1. **Unwrap it the day it lands**
   Get it out of the packaging so it can breathe.
2. **Give it a once-over**
   Look for anything soft, black or mushy, especially around the cut end.
3. **Cut off any black rot**
   Use a clean, sharp knife and keep going until the flesh looks healthy all the way through. Gloves are your friend.
4. **Spray it if it needs it**
   If it's had rot or looks a bit sad, use a fungicide such as Yates Anti Rot, following the directions on the label.
5. **Let it dry out**
   Leave it somewhere shady and dry until the cut forms a callus. That can take up to 2 extra weeks, and a bit longer after a rough trip. This is your best protection against rot.
6. **Pot it up, then hold the water**
   Use a free-draining mix. To be on the safe side, don't water your cutting for the first month.



Ugly but okay

- Wrinkled, a bit shrunken or looking thirsty
- Scuffs, scratches or a few lost spines
- A small soft or black spot you can cut away

Follow the steps above and give it time. It should come good.

Give us a shout

- Soft or black through most of the plant
- Snapped, crushed or falling apart
- Rot that keeps coming back
- Anything at all you're not sure about

Email sales@cactuscountry.com.au within 7 days of delivery with your order number and a photo of the plant and packaging. We'll take a look and offer you a replacement or a refund, your choice.

The everyday stuff

Light

Cacti want a well-lit spot, and a little shade is okay. If yours starts stretching out as if it's searching for light, it needs more. Move it into full sun slowly so it doesn't burn, and give it a quarter turn each week.

Water

Cacti hate wet feet. Pop a finger or a knife in the soil: if the top 3 to 10cm is still moist, leave it. If it's dry, give it a good soak, then nothing until it dries right out. In winter that may mean no water at all.

Soil

1/3 sand
1/3 gravel
1/3 potting mix

Add some slow-release fertiliser. A quality cactus mix does the job too. Good drainage is what stops rot before it starts.

Something's wrong with my cactus



Going black and soft

This is most likely rot, one of the most common problems cactus growers face. If it's only small, use a fungicide such as Yates Anti Rot. If it's spread, cut the rot off, throw out the contaminated soil and start again with a fresh mix. Contact us if you need a hand.



White fluffy spots

You may have mealybugs or scale. Mealybugs gather around the base of a cactus or just beneath the soil, and white fluff is the early sign. Douse the plant in a strong mix of detergent and water to suffocate them. If they hang around, try a systemic insecticide mixed with white oil, following the label, to get the bugs feeding on the sap.



Sunburn

Plants moved straight from shade into direct sun are likely to burn. A light burn shows up as whitish discolouring, and a bad one becomes a hard brown scar. Move a lightly burnt plant into some shade and it can recover. Severe burns take more time to heal.

Still stuck?

Send us a photo. We've seen it all, and you're never bothering us.

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