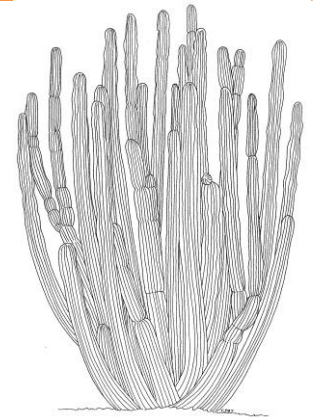


Transplanting a Large Cactus

It is frequently necessary or desirable to move a large cactus from its original location to a new place. This can be accomplished safely for both you and the cactus by following these recommended procedures. Unless you have access to specialized heavy equipment for moving large cacti, do not attempt to transplant a plant over 6 feet tall on your own. Cacti of this size weigh hundreds of pounds and there is significant danger both to you and the plant.

It is important to be aware that any cactus moved from the wild must have a tag on it, signifying that its removal was in accordance with regulations of the Arizona Department of Agriculture. The regulations require that this tag remain with the plant for its entire life.



WHEN TO TRANSPLANT: The best time to move a cactus is in the warm weather. However, cacti may be moved, except for the coldest times of the year, successfully at any time.

HOW TO TRANSPLANT: Begin by digging a trench 1-2 feet away and 12-18 inches deep all around the cactus. Secure the cactus with a blanket, carpet, worn-out hose, or any device that can be wrapped around the cactus to give you a firm hold. Using a shovel, begin to pry the plant out of the ground while another person(s) balances and controls the plant. Roots on these plants are shallow and a minimum amount of prying will loosen the plant enough to allow it to be released from the ground. Remove the plant to a shady area. If possible, allow the roots to dry out for 1 week before replanting. If this is not possible, treat the roots liberally with a fungicide and a bactericide, or cover the entire root mass with sulfur.

Measure the length from the soil line on the stem to the bottom of the root. Dig the new hole nearly as deep and twice as wide. It is very important that the cactus is planted no deeper than it was originally. With firm control of the plant, place the cactus in the hole and backfill. Be sure to keep firm control of the plant, it may not stand up on its own at this point. As you backfill, firm the soil with your foot and be sure the soil is level when you are completed. Gently release control on the plant to see if it will stand up on its own. If the plant is balanced properly, it will maintain itself at this time without support.

STAKING: It should not be necessary to secure plants shorter than 5 feet in height after transplanting. For larger plants, however, it is necessary. Make a collar around the plant with a material that will not cut into the skin. Attach this collar to wire and connect to rods or stakes that have been driven into the ground. There should be a stake on each side of the plant. Leave this support on the plant for at least three months in fairly heavy soil, six months in finer soil or very rocky locations.

SHADING: Cacti should be transplanted in such a way that the side that originally faced south is still facing south to prevent sunburn in its new location. If the plant is planted in warm weather it should be protected from the sun with shade cloth for the first summer. Shade cloth may be placed directly on the plant, or on a support.

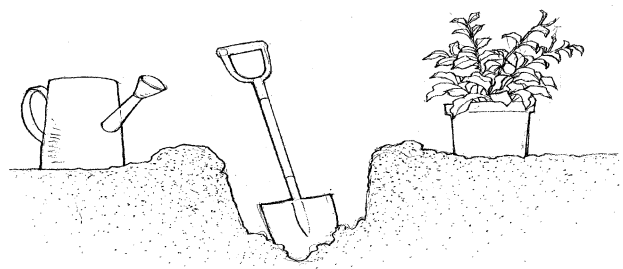
WATERING: Cacti that have been transplanted need to be watered deeply and slowly at the time they are transplanted. Set a hose about 2 feet from the plant and water all around the plant so that the roots will be encouraged to spread out. After the first watering, the backfill soil settles and the plant may shift or lean. Simply straighten the plant, firm the soil, and resecure the stakes.

If transplanting in the spring, it will be necessary to water regularly through the first summer. In the hottest days of the summer, this will be every 2 to 3 weeks, unless there is a rain. If the plant is transplanted near the end of the summer, it will need water only 2 or 3 times during the winter. Begin a summer water schedule when the weather has warmed and there has been no rain for 30 days, typically in April. If there is no rain for 60 days, water the plant regardless of the temperatures.

Need Help?

For more information about particular desert plants or problems, call the Desert Botanical Garden's Plant Hotline, 480-481-8120, Monday through Friday, from 10:00 – 11:30 a.m. or email your questions to planthotline@dbg.org

The Desert Botanical Garden provides a range of services to homeowners including a desert Plant Hotline, a variety of classes about landscaping and gardening in the desert, an onsite library, and an extensive selection of resources in the Garden Shop.



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