

Cactus and Succulents

are one of the main native plants in our Sonoran Desert. They have been used for food, drinks, dyes, medicine, building materials, fencing, fish hooks, tools, furniture, firewood and religious ceremonies.

* **Succulents** - Are plants that can survive for long periods of time without water. They exhibit succulence, the ability to store water in their stems, leaves or roots.

* **Cactus** - Are Succulents that have areoles which are cushion like structures where spines or flowers come out. Cactus do not die after they bloom.

* **Protective Laws** - Arizona has Native Plant Laws that make it illegal to remove Native Cactus growing in their original habitat unless you have an Arizona State permit and a State tag tied on each plant before it is removed. Apr '07

Some Succulent Facts

* **Saguaros** - Arizona's state flower. Flowers white when they are about 50 years old or 8' tall. They get their first arm, usually on the south side, when they are about 50 to 100 years old. Many live to over 200 years old, we do not know how to date them.

* **Fishhook Barrel Cactus** - Often grow pointing towards the south, a useful compass. Bloom in August.

* **Agaves** - Reproduce in three different ways; seeds, pups, and bulbils. Many Agave species die after they send up their tall bloom stalk with seeds and/or bulbils.

* **Ocotillo** - Highly efficient water users with spiny stems originating from a short trunk. They have bright red-orange flowers.

For More Information

Tucson Cactus & Succulent Society - visit our web site at:
www.TucsonCactus.org

LET'S
Talk
ABOUT...



Questions and Discussion Topics about Cactus and Other Succulents

- 1) What is a Succulent? What is a Cactus? Can you name one of each type?
- 2) What is the biggest cactus in our Tucson desert? What color are its flowers and fruit?
- 3) What are some types of uses of cactus and succulents by Native Americans and others?
- 4) What allows some cacti to grow very tall or large without breaking in half or falling over?
- 5) What purpose do the spines on cacti have? Can you think of several?
- 6) Who provides homeland security for the Barrel cactus? How does this work?
- 7) How many ribs does a baby Saguaro have? How many does a large Saguaro have?
- 8) What animals in the desert interact in one way or another with cacti? How?
- 9) Which cactus can create "boots" to help protect itself? Who causes this to happen?
- 10) Which cacti often have fuzzy white patches on their pads? What is this?
- 11) Which common thorny desert plant is an excellent source of food for humming birds?
- 12) What cactus fruit is often used to make cactus jelly or used to flavor drinks?
- 13) Why do Cholla spines hurt so much and resist when you pull them out of your skin?

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