

relocating one of your saguaros continued...

Dig around the base about 12 inches out exposing all the lateral roots. Cut roots that extend beyond a foot. Someone needs to hold the cactus upright while another person digs to expose the tap root(s). You can cut the tap root near the bottom where it is small. Lay the saguaro down, trim broken roots. You can replant immediately being careful not to damage the tap root.

Hedgehogs

Follow the barrel guide with some additional suggestions per below.



Some of the hedgehog cacti are marked for south with a white mark on the spines or the skin. If not marked, place the side with heavier spines or signs of flower buds towards the south if this is evident, else guess.

Leave as many roots as possible on the hedgehogs, trimming only the damaged ones and anything beyond 6 inches long. Dead or damaged heads can be removed using a sharp clean blade (wipe with alcohol) like a serrated bread knife.

Shading Suggestions - All Cacti

Our native cacti protect themselves from the sun with spines. If your rescued cacti is not heavily spined or is bright green, then it may have been growing in a shady location like under a bush or tree. All will need some extra shade for the first 2 growing seasons (April to November) to be sure it does not sunburn. Heavy shade will not let the cactus adjust to the new conditions, use only about 30% blockage shade cloth or some branches from a bush. Most stores do not know the percent blockage for their shade cloth, nurseries will.

Arizona Native Plant Tags

The State of Arizona Native Plant tag, Department of Agriculture, is to remain on the cactus until replanted. It is against the law to transport a native plant that was removed from its original growing location without a valid tag attached to the plant. This does not apply to cultivated plants grown from seed or cuttings. Violations may constitute a felony and may subject the violator to a fine, up to \$250 per plant. Once the cactus is planted, remove the tag and keep it as proof of ownership. The tags may not be reused.

Once a native cactus is relocated with the proper tag, it does not need another tag when relocated or sold unless it is a saguaro over 4 feet tall. All saguaros over 4 feet tall require a tag to be moved off your property or sold. Your original tag may be reused for the same saguaro only. You may relocate cacti on your property or destroy them without obtaining any tags or permits unless you are clearing 1/3 of an acre or more; then a permit must be obtained and a native plant inventory may be required. To be sure you are clear on the laws, Contact the Arizona Department of Agriculture for clarification or more information (520) 628-6317.

Saguaros over 8 inches tall will have a white tag with the word “Saguaro” printed on it. All under 8 inches will have orange tags. Each tag has a unique serial number to document the type of cactus listed on the permit and to identify the property location. Saguaros grown in nurseries or seed grown will not have tags.

TCSS Contact Information

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Planting & Care of your bare-root Barrel Cactus Hedgehog Saguaro



*Your cactus was rescued by
volunteer members from the
“Cactus Rescue Crew” of the
Tucson Cactus and Succulent Society*

*It was rescued from a Greater
Tucson area to be cleared for new
development, a road widening, or
possibly a new utility line.*

*Thanks to a conscientious developer,
the Cactus Rescue Crew, and **you**, this
native plant will have a new home
instead of being destroyed.*

Barrel Cactus

Find the South side of the Cactus

All barrel cacti should have been marked with a white dot on the south side. A few spines or the skin of the plant should have a white marking. It is very important to orient the cactus in the same direction that it was originally growing. They are very sun sensitive and can easily sunburn. If not



marked, make a guess based on the fact that most larger barrels tend to grow leaning towards the south. Cacti will usually be a richer green on the north side, there are often many finer spines near the cactus flesh on the south side to give more sun protection.

Trim the Roots

Barrel cactus roots should be trimmed to about 4 inches long prior to planting. For larger barrels, 12 inches and larger, trim roots so they do not extend much beyond the outside edge of the cactus. Trim any broken roots just above the damage. Excessive root lengths will not help. New roots will develop underneath the plant. New roots often grow from the cut off root tips.

Pick a Good Location - Sunburn Concerns

Pick a location that will not have standing water from heavy rains (ponding) or weekly watering from other plants. Some barrels grow under the shade of desert trees but most are in direct sun and can take full sun once re-established. Use **shade cloth** (about 30% blockage) or a few branches from brittlebush or other shrubs on the top and south side. Keep it shaded for the first two growing seasons (April to November) to provide some shade if not shaded by trees or buildings.

Dig a Hole

Dig a shallow hole to accommodate the shape and the roots on the bottom of the barrel. Dig it only deep enough to plant it to the soil line on the side of the cactus. For a larger barrel, an inch deeper won't hurt. Be sure the soil in the bottom of the hole has good drainage. We use pure pea gravel.

Plant it

The cactus should be planted as soon as possible but can sit in the shade for weeks. Orient to the south. It does not need to sit out for days as it does not have any flesh to heal over like cuttings have. Place the cactus in the hole and push soil around and under it so the roots are in contact with soil (use a stick or the end of your shovel to avoid injury to your hands). The soil should be packed around the base and roots to hold it in position. Another method is to add water to the soil as you plant to help embed the roots in the soil. We plant our barrels in total pea gravel for fast root growth.

Watering

Water the plant thoroughly about two weeks after planting so the roots get soaked. Water about every three weeks in cooler months, no more than once per week in hot months for about a year until established. Too much water can cause rot, killing the cactus. Sprinkling cacti (except ocotillo) will not help, cacti need water down at the roots.

Once the barrel cactus, hedgehog, or small saguaro (under 4 feet tall) is established, probably within two years, it should not need any supplemental water except possibly in very dry summer months. Large saguaros can take 4 or 5 years to re-establish and require less frequent watering since they have so much storage to draw from assuming they were well hydrated before being removed. As saguaros age, the bottom portion often turns a crusty brown. This is normal. Only saguaros with soft mushy discolored areas should be treated or cut out.

Saguaros

Follow the barrel cactus instructions and the additional suggestions per the notes below.

The south side should be marked like the barrel cacti. Saguaros can burn quite easily. Any lightening of the skin from a lighter green to yellowish or white is usually an indication that it is burning, give it some shade immediately, 30% is recommended. Sunburn is usually permanent damage but will not kill the plant if not too severe.



When trimming the roots, do not trim the center tap root unless it is damaged. When planting be sure to pack the soil to hold it vertical. It is best to use pea gravel or chat material (small pebbles) so it will pack but still let in plenty of water and air. Mortar sand is not good as it packs solid. Do not use any sulphur unless diseased.

Relocating One of Your Saguaros

Saguaros can be quite heavy so anything over 4 feet tall requires two strong people and anything over 6 feet usually requires some type of machinery. Depending on hydration, a 6 foot saguaro can easily weigh over 250 pounds. Larger saguaros should only be moved by professionals as they can be very dangerous for the novice. Serious personal injury can result. The cactus skin can be easily damaged, the plant can easily crack or even break in half. Any damage to the saguaro will greatly decrease the odds of survival.

Mark the saguaro for south near the base so it can be re-planted with the same orientation. Wrap heavy carpet, with the plush side towards the saguaro, around the entire cactus, especially over the fattest part, tie ropes around the carpet in a couple of places to secure the carpet. *continued*