

Cacti

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Cacti Latest News

New research reveals that cacti create new species surprisingly quickly, despite their slow-growing reputation.

About Cacti

- Cacti are a type of **plant** that is known for its **thick, fleshy stem and its spines**.
- There are nearly **2,000 species** and 139 genera.
- These plants are **native to the deserts of North and South America** and have **adapted to the dry, hot climate**.
- Cacti come in a wide **variety of shapes and sizes**.
- One of the most unique things about cacti is their ability to **store large amounts of water in their stems**.
 - This adaptation helps them to **survive in desert conditions** where water is scarce.
 - **When it rains**, cacti **absorb water through their roots** and **store it in their stems**. This water is **used by the plant during dry periods**.

- The **stem** is **covered in a layer of protection** that **helps prevent evaporation**.
- Cacti also have **specialized roots** that are **able to absorb water quickly**.
- The **shape** of a cactus also plays a **role in its water-saving abilities**.
 - **Most cacti have a columnar shape**, which means that they have a **narrow base and a wide top**.
 - This shape **allows the plant to minimize its surface area** so that less water is lost through evaporation.
- There are **two main types of cacti**: opuntias and columnar cacti.
 - **Opuntias**, also called **prickly pears**, are cacti that have **flat, fleshy pads instead of the traditional cylindrical stem**. These plants are **covered in spines**, and they produce small, **edible fruits**.
 - **Columnar cacti**, on the other hand, have a **tall, straight stem** with **ridges running up and down** its length.
 - These cacti often grow to be **quite large**, and are home to many species of animals in their native habitats.
- **Cacti** can be **distinguished from other succulent plants** by the **presence of areoles, small cushionlike structures with trichomes** (plant hairs) and, in almost all species, **spines** or barbed bristles (glochids).
 - **Areoles** are **modified branches**, from which flowers, more branches, and leaves (when present) may grow.

Source: SD

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