

Gymnocactus (Werdermann)

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Mostly small globular plants with smallish pink and purple flowers, these gems feature beautifully colored spines against bright white wool. They have been included in *Neolloydia* in the past but seemed to have been settled in their original genus. Now botanists have decided to lump them into *Turbinicarpus*. Hobbyists will have no trouble distinguishing *Turbinicarpus* from *Gymnocactus*.

They are native to north central Mexico. One species, *G. subterraneus*, has a long taproot that reaches deep into cracks in rocks in habitat.

Many think them difficult to grow. In the Sonoran desert, they grow easily. They like pure mineral soil mix (our native soil is ideal), dry cool winters and adequate summer water, drying out between waterings like *Mammillaria*. Prolonged dry spells are much more easily tolerated than too many waterings. Mine seem happy with full sun, which brings out the wool from the centers.

More and more are available now. Seed is usually available from Mesa Garden, the Cactus and Succulent Society Seed Depot, and plants from Miles' 2 Go in Tucson.