

## **Watering Cacti**

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I water my cacti in large pots on a 7-10 day schedule, but I also use a water meter (a good investment). Small pots need more water, about every 3-5 days.

All my plants, except seedlings, are fed from March to June. With seedlings, I use a ten-cup coffee pot, filling it with warm water and a small amount of fertilizer (20-20-20 Peters). A MacDonald's coffee spoon is the perfect size to provide one heaping spoonful per coffee pot of water. I feed every time I water for the first year of growth. Some say that I push my seedlings too fast, but the bigger they are, the quicker they can be transplanted into their own pots. I grow my seedlings in a mix of two parts #12 sand and one part gravel or granite chips, to which I add 10% black Michigan peat.

On my older plants, I use 5-50-17 or 5-55-6 fertilizer. Both are good. One teaspoon per five gallons of water each month is a good dose. The pots are all so leached once a month, but I let my plants rest during the hot and humid parts of July and August, a period of about six weeks. The plants are misted in the evening during this period, however, so they don't dry out completely. Watering plants at this time of the year may result in rotting.

I have a lath house and cover it with plastic from December to April, thus, turning it into a greenhouse for winter. Some plants do need water during the winter rest period. I never let my winter temperature drop below 50 degrees F. at night. Day time temperatures are harder to control, but I do have an exhaust fan on the west side and a removable panel at the east end to move cool air through the house. If more cooling is needed, I remove the plastic from the door at the cool north end. That keeps day time temperatures close to 80 degrees F. My plants appear to do best at these temperatures.