

EPIPHYTIC CACTI

Most species of cacti originate in dry, arid, desert conditions. Epiphytic cacti, however, come from the warm, moist environment of the tropical forests.



Schlumbergera sp.

Included in this group are "Epiphyllums" (Orchid cacti), Schlumbergera (Christmas cacti) and Rhipsalidopsis (Easter cacti). They tend to be free flowering - often with large, showy blooms - and are frequently seen in cultivation.

Cultivation / Plantcare

Epiphytes can be treated in a similar way to normal houseplants. They do not normally present the grower any real problems.

Watering

If these plants are grown in the house they can be watered all year round, preferably with tepid, lime-free water. If grown in a greenhouse watering should be reduced during the colder weather, though water can still be given on sunnier days.

Although they should never be left standing in water, they are more susceptible to drying out than "desert" cacti and should not be left completely dry for long periods.

Epiphytes benefit from regular spraying with tepid water and the occasional feeding with a general purpose fertiliser.

Position

A light airy position is preferred, though some shading should be given to protect the plants from direct sunlight in the summer. A position outside in semi-shade during the warmer months would be beneficial.

Temperature

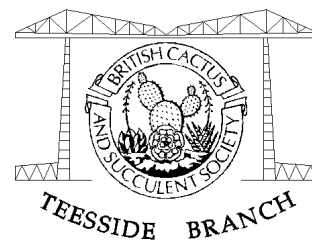
For safety the minimum winter temperature should be in the range 7 - 10°C (45 - 50°F). In summer, quite high temperatures can be tolerated provided adequate ventilation is provided.



Aporophyllum 'Wendy'

Compost

The compost should be a well aerated, acid mixture, typically peat based with the addition of some dust-free grit and perlite.



Acknowledgement

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