

The Beauty of Cactus Gardens May Surprise You

How does the idea of a cactus garden make you feel? It probably depends on how familiar you are with cactus plants. This type of garden is not just for the desert Southwest, although cacti do grow wild there. If you're unfamiliar with cactus plants, you may just think of them as prickly, unattractive things that are at home only in desert locations.

Of course, these plants thrive in extreme conditions that include high heat and low moisture. At the same time, these are the very qualities that make them a good choice for a home garden design. You might be surprised to learn that most cactus plants produce gorgeous blooms. Plus, in addition to the seasonal flowers, they also provide a wide variety of year-round color.

Despite the somewhat different appearance that cacti can have, their flowers tend to resemble "normal" cultivated plants. The buds have a shape similar to the flowers of many other plants. They are also available in a wide spectrum of colors as well.

Consider the prickly pear cactus for example. This plant produces flower blooms that are strikingly similar to roses or tulips. They range in color from solid red to peach and white. The large blooms appear at the end of each spine. The prickly pear cactus pads themselves also change color, transitioning from pale green to pink and even deep purple.

The prickly pear cactus also happens to be an edible plant (in fact, most cactus plants are edible) and produces fruit pods in addition to flowers. It's safe to eat both the cactus pads and the fruit. A popular use for the pads is to make jelly or jam, although some fry them in butter.

When planning a garden that includes cactus plants, make sure you understand the size and shape of mature plants. Some cacti can grow really tall (like 15 feet or more). Many varieties of cactus will also spread out over a fairly large area, so account for this growth pattern when you are choosing where to place each plant.

The water requirements of cactus plants are quite low, so usually the biggest problem home gardeners will have is watering them too much. Generally, they only need about an inch of water every one to three months. If they get too much water, cactus plants will die off. So the only complicated thing about cactus gardening is keeping them dry enough. So what can you do if you've fallen in love with the idea of a cactus garden, but you live in a rainy climate? Container gardening! Keep your cactus plants in containers so you can move them under shelter during periods of rain.

About the Author

Source: <http://diygardeningtips.com>