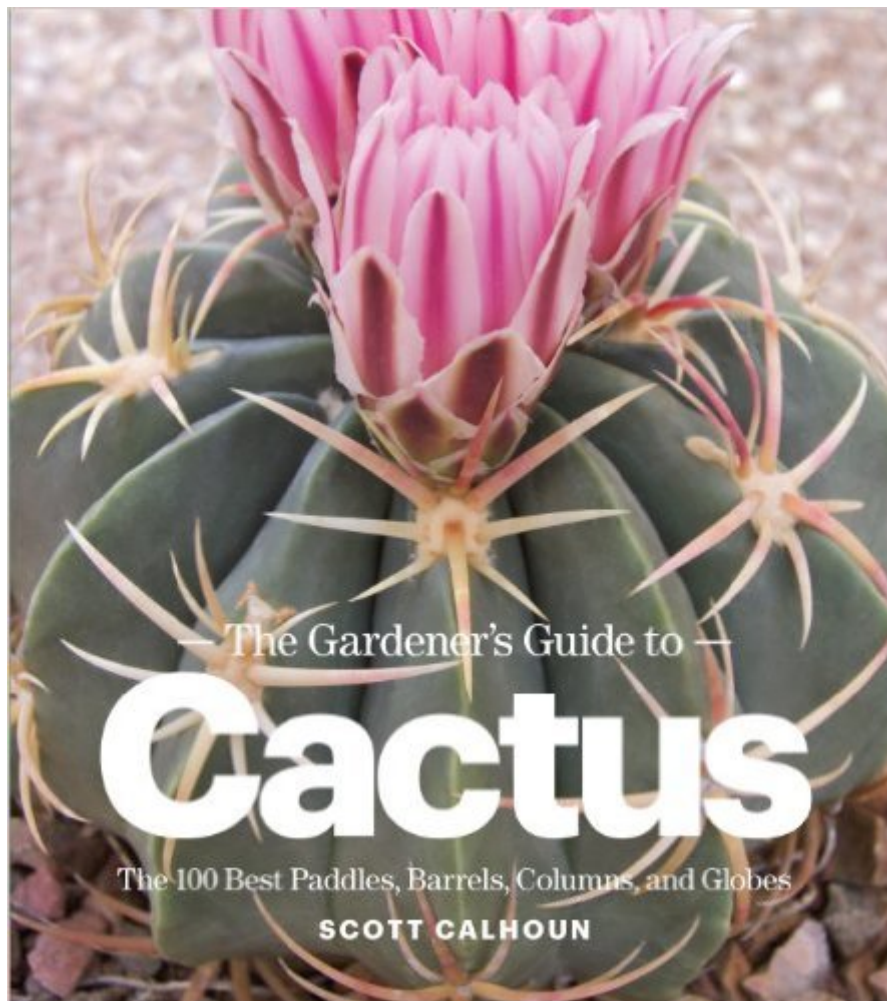


The book was found

The Gardener's Guide To Cactus: The 100 Best Paddles, Barrels, Columns, And Globes



Synopsis

When it comes to garden plants, cacti are anything but standard issue. The bulk of home gardens contain exactly zero species of cactus, and the thought of growing them makes gardeners think, "Ouch!" In *The Gardener's Guide to Cactus: The 100 Best Paddles, Barrels, Columns, and Globes*, Scott Calhoun is out to change that perception, and bring the beauty and ease of cactus home. It's high time that cacti took their place alongside the trendy succulent.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I'm an Arizona gardener, so back when I used to work for Borders I adopted the Local Gardening section. We had a number of books about "xeriscape gardening," featuring low-water-use plants -- but most of them focused on shrubs, trees, and small flowering plants like penstemon. Many customers were happy to buy these, but many more were looking for gardening books that dealt specifically with cacti. We did have a big hardback, a gorgeous \$50 tome full of spectacular photos of cacti and succulents, but it was a coffee-table book, not a gardening guide. It wasn't until I started working at the Heard Museum Book Store in Phoenix that Timber Press published the perfect cactus gardening book, *THE GARDENER'S GUIDE TO CACTUS*, by Scott Calhoun. This guide lists 100 cacti for your garden or patio. It's lavishly illustrated with photos of each plant, and many of them are in bloom -- so you can see what the flowers look like. The introduction gives you general the background of cacti, and lists the "Tools of the Prickly Trade" you'll need. Under each plant name you'll find quick reference boxes that tell you the natural habitat, what size the plant will reach,

the cold hardiness, and the flowering season. And the clearly labeled sections will give you clear ideas about watering guidelines, soil needs, design suggestions, even culinary uses (if applicable). If I had been able to order this book for my Local Gardening section at Borders, we would have sold out. It's flying off the shelf at my new job. And of course -- I bought one myself. You'll want to have it with you the next time you visit your local plant nursery!

I am slowly but surely obtaining every single book written by Mr. Calhoun. I am absolutely in awe at how clearly and down to a novice gardening level Mr. Calhoun explains every thing in detail. No pretentious airs, just plain info that is tailored to the particular plant or subject. I've often wished I could live in a less dry climate so I could have beautiful plants, but now with Mr. Calhoun's direction I have and fully understand my southwest area garden and am very excited at expanding it to include many dry climate plants.

THE GARDENER'S GUIDE TO CACTUS by Scott Calhoun is a 228-page book on cacti from North America that are suitable for gardens. Almost every page contains a close-up color photograph of a cactus, most of which are in the flowering state. Generally, the photographs do not include any part of the landscape. Some of the photos are obviously from the desert, while others are from home gardens or from arboretums. However, for the purposes of this book, it is not really relevant where the photo was taken. Essentially all of the photographs were taken at very close range (as one can tell from the cover image). Of course, there are many medium-range photographs as well. The photographs are not encumbered with shadows, or with garden paraphernalia, or with any other distracting features. The author knows how to communicate (he is no amateur). There are no maps or graphs.

INFORMATION IN TABLES. For each cactus, there is a little table that discloses native habitats, mature size, hardiness in terms of preferred temperature range, and flowering season. The following documents what is found in some of the tables, and in related text. We learn that **PEYOTE VERDE**, which is hallucinogenic and which grows almost flush to the ground, is from **COAHUILA, MEXICO**, where it grows above 7,200 feet (page 40). We learn that **WHITE SANDS CLARET CUP HEDGEHOG**, which has strawberry-flavored fruit, grows at White Sands National Monument in New Mexico (page 56). Also, for example, we learn that **TWIN-SPINED CACTUS**, which is totally white, hails from **HILDALGO, QUERETARO**, and **SAN LUIS POTOSI** in **MEXICO**, produces edible fruits with black seeds (page 78).

CHAPTERS. The book contains five chapters: (1) **INTRODUCTION**; (2) **LOW AND MOUNDING CACTUS**; (3) **BARRELS AND GLOBES**; (4) **PADDLES AND RODS**; and (5) **CONSPICUOUS COLUMNAR CACTUS**. Chapter 2 is further divided into sections that detail:

HEDGEHOGS, CLARET CUP, BEEHIVES, PINCUSHIONS and GREAT CHIHUAHUA NIPPLE CACTUS. Most of the cacti in Chapter Two are ordinary and are almost like "generic cacti." Of course, there are some notable exceptions. For example, VIEJITOS (old man cactus) is a hedgehog cactus that has long white hairs (page 41). SONORAN RAINBOW CACTUS, which is also a hedgehog, looks like a barrel cactus with stripes. The stripes are alternating red and white stripes. We learn that it grows up to 12 inches high and 5 inches wide (page 49). Pages 78-93 show cacti that are substantially white or completely white, such as, TWIN-SPINED CACTUS, which has long spines sticking out from the body and short spines sticking out from the stem of the cactus, OLD LADY CACTUS, which has white hairs, MAMMILLARIA KLISSINGIANA, which grows in spheres of 6-10 inches wide, OWL'S EYE PINCUSHION, which is intensely white at the top (like a round skull cap) and only moderately white elsewhere. Chapter Three is divided into sections entitled: (1) STARS OF THE GARDEN; (2) HAIL TO THE WOOLLY TOPPED BARRELS; and (3) FEAR NOT THE FEROCIOUS BARRELS. Although these titles are whimsical, it should be noted that the photographs are all on-point, and are extremely effective at communicating the aesthetic and structural qualities of each cactus. Also, the text is on-point, and does not meander into irrelevant topics. Thus, although some of the titles are whimsical, the book commands respect. Regarding the section on star cacti, there are plenty of photos of different types of star cacti, most notably, SEA URCHIN CACTUS, which looks like a green tomato covered with rows of large white buttons (about 100 large buttons in all) and about 2,000 tiny white buttons (page 111). We read, "Larger polka dot tufts are distributed symmetrically. It produces yellow flowers with a red center over the summer months. It is listed as endangered in the U.S. Endangered Species Act." (page 110) Also quite unusual is BISHOP'S CAP, which is purple and covered with millions of tiny white dots. This cactus has a 5-sided symmetry and it resembles a bishop's hat that might be worn by a bishop, or at least by a bishop piece in a chess game. Chapter Four, "Paddles and Rods" (pages 146-191) includes pages on the familiar beavertail cactus and prickly pear. Fourteen kinds of prickly pear are shown, some of which are easy to find in the desert and in front yard gardens in cities. An eye-catcher is PURPLE FISHNET PRICKLY PEAR (pages 186-187), which has large purple-colored paddles covered with large green spots. We read that, "this fantastic prickly pear from the high Chihuahuan Desert has been overlooked as a landscape plant. Its aesthetic appeal readily comes into play in the wintertime when its pads become crisscrossed with purple. No other species has markings like this plant." Pages 148-161 disclose CHOLLA cacti. From the photographs, one can see that none of these are pretty, though the book correctly points out that some types of cholla (the ones that are tall and thin) are beautiful at sunrise or sunset, when the coatings of spines catches the sunlight

thereby creating a border that glistens like snow. These are from my own observations at ANZA BORREGO STATE PARK in California. Pages 152-153 disclose TEDDY BEAR CHOLLA, a plant that strikes terror into the hearts of tourists and travelers. At the CHOLLA GARDEN in JOSHUA TREE NATIONAL PARK, a large sign warns tourists of the dangers of cholla arms, which are shed and lie on the ground, or which are released from the plant when brushed against. The cholla arms stick into the skin, and stick through canvas shoes, blue jeans, and whatever. It is the case that the spines cannot be removed except with pliers. (I know this from first-hand experience, acquired at Joshua Tree National Park in the years 2011, 2012, and 2013.) In fact, the book recommends, "to dislodge a segment [cholla arm] that is stuck to you, use tongs." The book understandably states that TEDDY BEAR CHOLLA "is little used in gardens." CONCLUSION. This book will make a fine gift to home gardeners, to weekend travelers who frequent the desert, or to artists and photographers who might be susceptible to inspiration by the fascinating shapes and forms of various cacti.

If you like Cactus and want to grow them, this is a great basic book to start with. I must say, if you've been collecting cactus for some time and have basic skills of planting, repotting, feeding, etc...then this book is probably not for you. BUT...if you are just beginning, or have tried and not done too well, this is a wonderful book for you to pick up, own, and keep handy for when you run into problems. A really good reference. Buy it and you will be happy...and have it handy when you have questions. Really good book.

I like reading and learning about different cactus plants. I have around 50 different kinds of cactus and most need different care than just out in the sun and winter. Reading and learning from the experts who wrote this book has been a big help.

I bought the kindle version of the book as it was economical and a handy portable guide. This book is written for Western gardens, however it provides useful information for selection of cacti for other regions. The pictures are good and also provides information as to culinary use. The author provides specific characteristics of varieties in addition to species by giving common names and scientific nomenclature.

I had borrowed this book from my local library and after reading it decided to purchase my own copy. It is a very comprehensive book that answers many of the questions that arise when planning a new cactus landscape for your home.

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