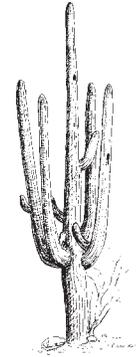




How to Grow a Saguaro (Sa-wah-roe)



The Saguaro Cactus *Carnegiea gigantea*

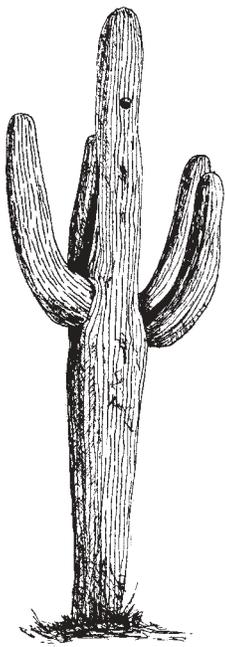
The saguaro is probably the most famous cactus in the world. Almost everyone has heard about this majestic symbol of the desert.

If you would like to grow a saguaro cactus in your home or classroom, all you have to do is follow the instructions below, and be very patient.

NOTE: Make sure that your saguaros are not exposed to freezing temperatures or they may die. If you do not live in a warm place like the Sonoran Desert, it is probably best to grow them indoors.

Remember, saguaros grow very slowly; be patient, have fun and do not over-water them.

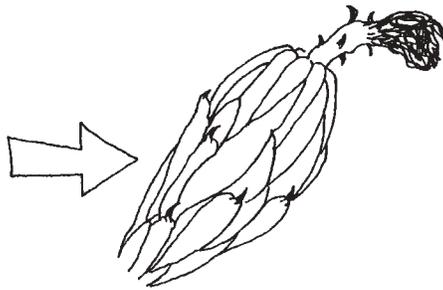
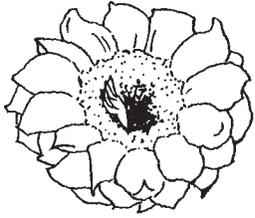
Growing Instructions



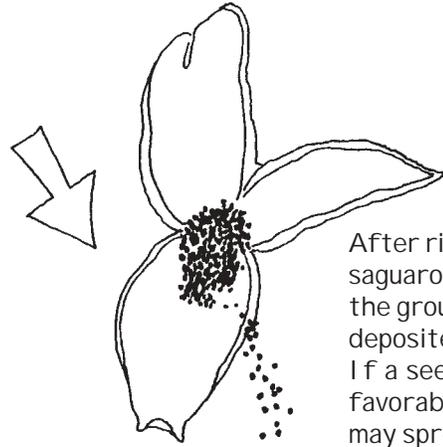
- 1) Pick a small to medium sized pot that has drainage holes in the bottom.
- 2) Fill the pot with soil that drains well, or buy a soil mixture that is specifically for cactus.
- 3) Using a sharp pencil, poke several small holes $\frac{1}{8}$ inch deep into the soil. Space the holes at least 1 inch apart. Put one seed in each hole and lightly press a pinch of soil over each seed.
- 4) Cover the pot with clear plastic wrap and poke or cut several small holes in the wrap.
- 5) Place the pot in a warm, well-lit location, but make sure that the pot does not receive direct sunlight.
- 6) Keep the pot covered with clear plastic wrap for 4 to 6 weeks. Moisten the soil about every 10 days. Do not over-water!
- 7) After removing the clear plastic wrap, you will only need to water about once per month. Do not over-water!
- 8) In about 1 to 2 years, you can transplant each saguaro to its own individual pot. They should be about 1 inch tall.

Life Cycle of the Saguaro Cactus

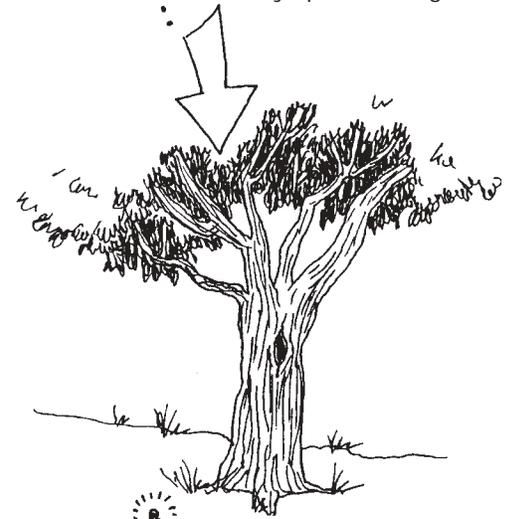
Saguaro blossoms appear at night during May and June.



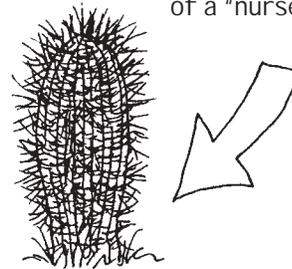
After pollination, each flower develops into a 1-2 ounce fruit. The fruits ripen in July, and each holds more than 2,000 tiny seeds!



After ripening, the saguaro seeds fall to the ground, or are deposited by birds. If a seed falls in a favorable place, it may sprout and grow.

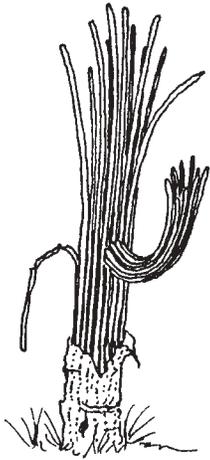


If a saguaro seedling is to survive, it needs the protection of a "nurse plant".

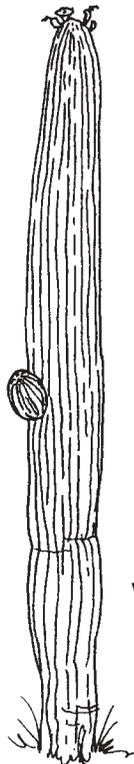


After its first year, the seedling's highly variable growth is controlled by the amount of water in the soil.

Saguaro cacti normally live for 150 - 200 years. Death may come by freezing, lightning, wind, old age or vandalism.



The first arm on a saguaro usually appears when the plant is 65-70 years old.



The first blossoms appear when the saguaro is 35-40 years old.

