

CARING FOR YOUR PLANTS: MEXICAN FENCEPOST

What Is A Mexican Fencepost?

Mexican Fencepost is a quick-growing cactus that develops in a columnar manner and can reach heights of up to 20 feet tall and spread by up to 6 feet. Native to Southern Mexico, these cacti require very little watering, enjoy year-round sunlight, tolerate intense heat, and can survive temperatures as low as 20 degrees Fahrenheit. The Mexican Fencepost is often used, as the name suggests, as a fence or barrier. They can produce greenish-pink flowers that bloom from March through April. These flowers become edible, dark-red, very sweet fruits.

How Do I Care For My Mexican Fencepost?

PEST CONTROL

Mexican Fenceposts are prone to attacks from scale insects. While there is no widely accepted treatment for preventing these attacks, many pest control companies offer removal services. Timely removal of pests often results in a full recovery for the cactus. Identifying the problem before it's too late is key. By taking the following steps, you can minimize the risk of losing your Mexican Fencepost to pests:

- Routinely check your cactus for scale insects. This can be done by purchasing tacky cards from your local home improvement store and placing them at the base of your cactus. If the cards fill with scale insects, you will need to call a pest control service to have the insects removed.
- During the winter months, the scale insects seek shelter to avoid being killed off by the cooler temps. By keeping the areas around your Mexican Fenceposts free of debris, clutter, weeds, etc., the scale insects will have nowhere to go and will be eliminated by the



Left: Cactus showing signs of scale insect infection
Source: Wikipedia Commons

COLD TEMPERATURES

Mexican Fencepost is frost sensitive. If frost is in the forecast, cover the top of the cactus with an old t-shirt, foam cup or wash cloth. Water sparingly in the winter as it does not grow in cold weather.

ROT

Proper watering is essential to the health and vitality of Mexican Fenceposts. They are prone to rot if the soil is too moist or if kept in the shade with very little exposure to sunlight.

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