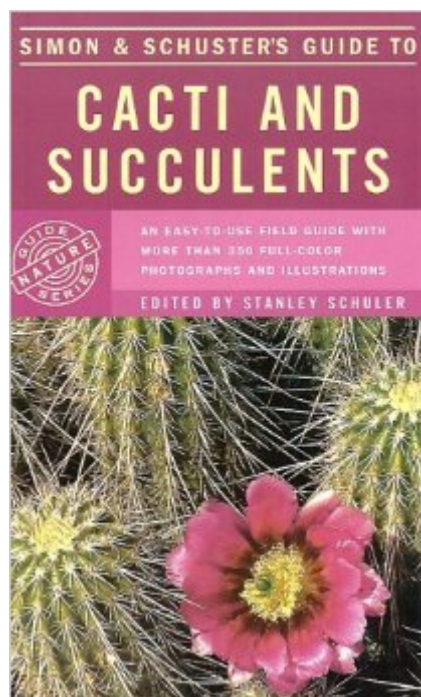


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Simon & Schuster's Guide To Cacti And Succulents: An Easy-to-Use Field Guide With More Than 350 Full-Color Photographs And Illustrations



Synopsis

Fascinating, informative, and user-friendly, "Simon & Schuster's Guide to Cacti and Succulents" is a stunning reference to an intriguing category of plants. A thorough introduction describes the history of "Cactaceae" (the largest of the many plant families known as succulents because they store water in their leaves, stems, and roots) and provides general guidelines for their cultivation. Then, each of the more than 300 detailed entries describes an individual species, including its place of origin and ideal conditions for its growth. Full-color photographs enable easy identification of the plants in the field. Whether for the casual gardener or the serious horticulturist, this beautiful and comprehensive guide will be an invaluable resource.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This guide to Cacti and Succulents is one of the greatest field guides that I have ever bought in my giant private collection of field and naturalist guides. As said above, this has numerous species and subspecies entries. I have never seen another cactus field guide with so many listings, mainly of cacti. There are a few succulents, but the cacti are the MAIN part of this book. If you want a guide to local succulents, purchase "Succulents", and "Succulents 2: The Illustrated Dictionary". But, if you are seeking out cacti, whether to plant them in a backyard, or simply find them in the field, this a priority to purchase. The photographs themselves are beautiful and DO show enough of the plant for field identification. A few of the more familiar species are listed along with common names, but this is not needed for the advanced naturalists it is geared toward. Also recommended: "Cacti: The Illustrated Dictionary."

If I had looked through this book before buying it online I never would have wasted the money on it. Nomenclature is totally out-of-date, temperature guides are just plain wrong, pictures are okay for close up but useless as to identifying overall form and structure. Since so many cactus are mis-identified or misnamed the pics don't help in identification without a more accurate book to cross-reference the plant name with. In terms of coverage of the cactus family this book is woefully inadequate. Entire genera are omitted and/or only have one plant covered when there are actually dozens of species.

The Simon & Schuster's Guide To Cacti and Succulents is somewhat misleading as they only describe cacti in their book. However, the compact, full-color field guide is an excellent addition to the novice or expert's bookshelf. The detailed descriptions of the 300 photographed species are especially impressive. An index of principal authors is also noteworthy as it provides a brief biography and list of works of over 50 leading scholars with major influences on cacti since the 17th century. A great find for any cacti enthusiast

I found this book to be both useful and informative, but not as one's only reference. It's a little too "biological". The pictures are good - they generally show enough of the plant, including the flowers to help with identification. It has been noted that it is not always possible with these pictures to completely identify some species. This is true. Many species of cactus look nearly identical and require an experienced botanist to tell them apart, even given the actual physical plants. This book is not quite as complete as some of the larger tomes (e.g.: "Illustrated Encyclopedia of Cacti" by Clive Innes, et al), in terms of number of species, but the description for each specimen is often more complete. Many entries include comments that would not be necessary to merely identify the plant. Some comments are even (very) slightly chatty and opinionated. At the front of the book is the best description of the scientific names of cactus that I have ever seen. It includes a detailed history of why cactus plants are named as they are, and shows how to understand them. Also explained is why there is disagreement between various books regarding the names of some cacti. Believe it or not, these plants are named logically. Gripe: the text is quite long on botanical jargon while at the same time, the glossary is stupidly terse. The book is obviously written for the non-biologist, and yet the book is peppered with botanical terms (like "ramified") that are nowhere-between-the-covers defined. Yet the book has a pronunciation guide to the latin terms, which no botanist would need... very strange. There are no hybrid (e.g.: cultivated) species represented at all. Other books do

include the hybrids. In spite of the title, there are no non-cactus succulents listed. The text makes this clear within a few paragraphs of the beginning, but if you bought the book without looking inside at all, you'd be misled by the title. Note: every author has a section about "how to water cactus", with his or her own strong opinions. No one book has the full story. They all agree that there is no rote method that does not require taking your own plants' situations into account. This book is particularly, perhaps overly, strident regarding best practices, and some other (almost any other) cactus reference should also be consulted to gain some perspective. I had previously rated this book as "4 stars" but I have changed my mind. It has turned out to be the cactus reference that I most often use. If you want one book with both cactus and other succulents then Terry Hewitt's "Complete Book of Cacti and Succulents" is probably a better choice but this book makes an excellent reference.

THIS IS A MUST HAVE FOR THE SERIOUS CACTUS COLLECTOR. SMALL, FAT, SUPER CLEAR AND CONCISE MODULARIZED ENTRIES WITH PICTURES, AND SPECIFICATIONS OF EACH CACTUS TYPE. THE ONLY THING I HAVE SEEN BETTER IS THE HUGE ANDERSON BOOK TITLED "THE CACTUS FAMILY", A BEHEMOTH DEFINITIVE VOLUME. THIS LITTLE BOOK IS THE NEXT BEST THING I HAVE SEEN ANYWHERE.

While this book contains a huge amount of information on cacti, the information on individual cacti is so technically oriented that the book is unsuitable for almost everyone except trained biologists and gardeners (and I have a PhD in astronomy, so I am very familiar with reading scientific literature). The cacti are organized by their latin names, with common names rarely given. Much of the information on the individual cacti is only relevant to identifying or cultivating the cacti. In contrast, such things as the Audobon field guides on birds and mammals present at least small amounts of information on the physiology and behavior of the species listed. The photos are of mediocre quality, and close-up photos of some cacti do not aid in identification. The one saving grace of this book is its introduction, which is written in a lighter style and which presents thorough background information on cacti. Nonetheless, I would recommend other books before this one.

This is my second book on cactus. I like all of the information given as it is helpful to me in learning about the different types of cacti. Anyone in the hobby or just wanting to know about cacti should find it extremely helpful. Highly recommended.

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