

# Cactus Garden



People use cacti to make a variety of things, from wood frames for homes (saguaro), to needles, to medicines, to this morning's breakfast! That's right; many people in the Southwest and Mexico regularly eat "nopales" and "tunas" (prickly pear pads and fruit).

## FUN FACT

Cacti do NOT have thorns. Cacti have spines. Thorns are modified branches; spines are modified leaves!

Cacti (plural) are amazing plants! Ranging in size from about an inch to over 50 feet tall, all cacti are New World plants, developing differently from those cactus look-a-likes in Africa and Asia. While most people think of hot, dry, and thorny when you say "cactus," these plants have adapted to life in cool climates, shady areas, and even in fairly wet areas. Some cacti live their entire lives up in a tree!

Our Cactus Garden has a pathway surrounding a circular bed of assorted true cactus. Some are tall and some are small, but they are cacti, one and all! Outside, along the path, a variety of *Yucca*, *Agave*, *Hesperaloe*, and other arid-loving plants fill the beds and provide good shelter for lizards.

## A Prickly Quiz



What color are the spines on the Devil's Pincushion cactus?

**Answer:** From gray to red



What shape are the sections of the cholla cactus?

**Answer:** Sausage shaped.

How many species of cactus are native to the state of Texas?

**Answer:** More than 70.

What pollinates the flower of the saguaro, the world's largest cactus?

**Answer:** Bats!



What do you call the sections of a prickly pear cactus?

**Answer:** Pads or cladophylls.

