

# In the Garden

## Cactus Love



Ok I know what you are thinking—she's totally lost it this time. Talking about the sex life of plants? Geez! Well folks nothing says reproduction in the plant world like flowers and they are just glorious at this time of year. I sell plants on a little stand in my driveway and I am always looking for things that produce nice flowers or are distinct. I like to make up little pots of succulents and this year added a few cacti.

I am a bit of an obsessive when it comes to certain groups of plants. Oh my, nothing like this ever happens at the Mill Bay Garden Club, *no obsessives here!* Well what a lie that is, we are a group of people who are fans



of all sorts of plants. Lately I have been obsessing on cactus. There are lots of kinds of cactus that grow well here. **In the Summer!** Most require winter protection in a frost-free cool room. Let them out in the spring and they are plants that grow lustily and look for love the same way other plants do. My big surprise this year was my Echinopsis Ele-

gant Lady cactus. She grew a dirty hairy looking bulge off her side and I wondered what kind of parasite this was. Then the bulge opened into a glorious pale pink flower. Holy moly! I did not expect that! Then all the little Heurnia zebrine (Lifesaver cactus) started to bloom. I am living in a greenhouse of ill repute!

There is one native cactus that you can grow here and lives through the winter. It is the famous Opuntia or Prickly Pear. It is common on the smaller gulf islands in the Salish Sea. Don't pick it though, lots of people grow it and will likely give you a bit.

So far I have not been jabbed by the cacti as I wear welding gloves when handling them. Worst job I have ever seen was on a visit to Arizona. My better half was playing a game of golf with friends and was jabbed by a big Barrel Cactus. Oh there were bandaids and sympathy all around! Try some cacti in your garden, they are lots of fun!

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