

## Propagation of live San Pedro cactus cuttings



The top rooted itself. Used the "wet & forget" rooting method.

Fast growing, flowering *Trichocereus Pachanoi*



1994

Mountain View, California



1997

A perfect climate for *Trichocereus* as there is no winter frost. Soil is alkaline clay, which they seem to prefer, and the sun shines all through the warm, dry summers.

Instructions that help anyone learn to grow this marvelous species.

Dedicated to a woman named Kate from Watsonville, California who sold me my first cuttings & instructions to propagate them.



Catalina Desert, Baja California, Mexico  
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## Using a rooting hormone

How to speed up rooting a San Pedro cutting with a plant hormone.



Do not handle rooting hormone without gloves; do not breathe the powder. This is a plant chemical that is not meant to be put in your mouth, eyes, or lungs



### Branch tip

Here is a San Pedro tip about 18" long ready for rooting. You can see by the curve that it was a branch.

### Start with a fully healed, dry cut

- Cut a fresh cactus with a sharp, clean knife. Sterilize by flushing with isopropyl alcohol. (not really necessary in warm, dry climates)
- An electric fan will help to dry the cut.
- Let the specimen rest in a shady, cool place for 2 weeks.

It is ready when the cut is dry like paper showing no mold or rot. If it molds you may cut & sterilize again, air dry with a fan, etc.



# Cactus Propagation Tips

## Callus, or healed cut

Sometimes referred to as a callus, the end is healing very much like our bodies form a scab. In time this will thicken into a scar like material. In fact, any cut, scrape, or gouge on a San Pedro can heal with a tan colored scab.



**Rooting hormones** contain Auxins (plant hormones) that induce plants to grow roots in stem tissue. This is triggered by creating high levels of plant Auxins to another plant hormone called Cytokinins. *Whatever.*

Here we are increasing the level of Auxins on stem tissue by applying a powder so that the San Pedro is stimulated to root.

## After rooting

Good root growth in a healthy plant is ensured by having a well-aerated planting medium that retains moisture, but allows oxygen and carbon dioxide to diffuse.

Soil-less growing mixes are free of harmful bacteria, mold, bugs, etc. They are mixtures of perlite, vermiculite, and peat moss. This provides a good balance of pore space and moisture retention, but avoid over watering. *I use sterilized garden soil mixed with sand and perlite.*



One brand of rooting hormone.

**Wet the end** so the dry rooting hormone powder will stick. Dip in filtered or distilled water.

## About water

Avoid fresh tap water as it has chlorine in it. It is customary, for watering plants, to let tap water set in a container overnight so the chloramine gas is released. Only then is it used to water plants.



Dip the cutting to wet it.

# Cactus Propagation Tips

## Rooting Powder

Dip the wet end in the rooting hormone. DO NOT BREATHE THE POWDER! Or you will have plant roots growing in your lungs.

Normally one dips plant shoots into the jar of powder directly. Our San Pedro is too big to fit, so I poured the powder into a bowl.



Dipped in rooting hormone

## Set in loose soil

This is sterile soil made that way by baking in the oven for 1 hour at 400 degrees F.

The pot is small because I am only using it to get roots started. Later it will be planted in a large pot. This small one makes it easy to lift up and check for root buds. This rooting process uses sterile soil made by baking potting soil in an oven at 400 degrees for an hour. The soil is made from garden topsoil, sand, home made compost (well aged), and perlite. It stays loose, has excellent drainage, natural minerals from the clay soil and humus provided by the compost.



The problem with long sections is always the mechanical support needed to keep them from falling over. It is simply easier to root short tips, that is why most growers sell small specimens. However, it is just as easy to root a tall one.



There you go Sir, lean against the wall.

# Cactus Propagation Tips

## A small tip

Here is a short section tip about 7 inches long. First we wet the end so the powder will stick.



## Rooting hormone

The wet end has been dipped in the bowl of rooting hormone.



Now it is ready to be set in a pot of sterile soil.

## Set on sterile soil

Do not plant it deep in wet soil or it may rot. Half an inch deep is OK, but remember that roots buds will form—not tiny, delicate root hairs—so it will be OK to lift up and see how it is doing. Later you will “pot it up” into a larger container, or outside.



## Take a drink

*Oh! Thank you! I was so thirsty.*

See how easy it is to root a short tip? Simply pressing it into loose soil will hold it up—no staking necessary.



END