

How to Propagate *Acanthocereus oaxacensis*



Propagating the Queen of the Night's Cousin: A Guide to *Acanthocereus oaxacensis*

Introduction

Acanthocereus oaxacensis, a member of the cactus family Cactaceae, is a relatively rare and striking plant, often referred to as the Oaxaca night-blooming cereus (although this common name isn't universally used). Characterized by its robust, climbing or sprawling habit, thick, sharply-ribbed stems, and stunning nocturnal blooms, this cactus holds a special appeal for collectors and enthusiasts. Its unique beauty and relative difficulty in propagation contribute to its popularity, making successful cultivation a rewarding experience. This article explores various methods for propagating *Acanthocereus oaxacensis*, detailing their challenges and rewards.

Seed Germination

Seed germination in *Acanthocereus oaxacensis* is possible but presents several challenges. The main hurdle is the relatively

low germination rate observed in many cacti species.

Challenges: Low germination rate, susceptibility to fungal diseases (damping-off) in moist conditions, slow initial growth.

Tips: Seeds should be sown in a well-draining cactus potting mix. A warm temperature (around 25-30°C) is crucial. Maintain moderate humidity, avoiding waterlogging. Consider using a fungicide to prevent damping-off. Pre-soaking seeds for a few hours might improve germination success.

Rewards: Genetic diversity leading to [potentially more robust and varied plants](#) than those propagated vegetatively. The possibility of large-scale propagation, although requiring considerable patience and attention to detail.

Cuttings

Cuttings are a more reliable and popular method for propagating *Acanthocereus oaxacensis*.

Challenges: Properly preparing cuttings to prevent rot. The successful rooting of the cuttings requires specific environmental conditions, particularly sufficient warmth and humidity.

Tips: Use well-sharpened, sterile tools to take stem cuttings of at least 10cm in length. Allow the cut ends to callus over for several days before planting in a well-draining cactus potting mix. Provide bottom heat to encourage rooting, while maintaining humidity to prevent desiccation. Avoid overwatering. Root hormones can be beneficial but aren't strictly necessary.

Rewards: Relatively high success rate compared to seed germination. Faster establishment of new plants compared to seedlings. Preservation of the parent plant's traits.

Division

Division, separating established clumps into smaller sections, is another viable propagation method for *Acanthocereus oaxacensis*, particularly for plants that have grown substantially in size.

Challenges: The risk of damaging the root system during division. Each divided section requires careful handling to ensure successful establishment.

Tips: Carefully remove the plant from its pot and gently separate the clump into smaller sections, each with a healthy root system attached. Plant these sections in individual pots with fresh, well-draining cactus mix. Avoid overwatering immediately after division.

Rewards: A quick and efficient way to increase the number of plants from a mature specimen. Relatively easy technique once the plant is mature enough for division.

Tissue Culture

Tissue culture presents a possibility but is a complex technique usually undertaken in laboratories with specialised equipment and expertise. It is not a practical method for typical home propagators.

Challenges: Requires specialized equipment, a sterile environment, and technical skills. High initial costs and investment in specialized media and equipment.

Tips: For those with access to appropriate laboratory facilities and knowledge, tissue culture will offer incredibly efficient propagation leading to hundreds of plants from a single sample. However, this is beyond the scope of a home 'how-to' article.

Conclusion

Propagating *Acanthocereus oaxacensis* offers a unique challenge and immense reward. While seed germination is possible but

involves a degree of unpredictability and patience, cuttings provide a more reliable vegetative propagation method. Division offers a viable option for established plants. Tissue culture is an option but is a complex laboratory technique. Each approach presents unique challenges, requiring attention to detail regarding humidity, watering, and preventing fungal infections. However, the successful cultivation resulting from these efforts, leading to rewarding displays of the magnificent flowers of this spectacular cactus, is an experience that deeply connects the gardener to the natural world. Successful propagation, especially from seed, offers a special appreciation for this fascinating plant and its resilience. Don't be deterred by the challenges; with care and attention, even the less experienced cultivator can enjoy the unique satisfaction of propagation and the beauty of *Acanthocereus oaxacensis*.