

How to Propagate *Gymnocalycium capillense*



From Seed to Cactus: A Guide to Propagating the Capillense *Gymnocalycium*

The *Gymnocalycium capillense*, with its mesmerizing swirls and captivating blooms, is a prized possession for any cactus enthusiast. But what if you could share this beauty with friends, or even expand your own collection? That's where propagation comes in!

This guide will walk you through the exciting process of bringing new *Gymnocalycium capillense* plants into the world, both from seed and through cuttings.

The Seedling Saga:

- **Collecting Seeds:** Patience is key here. The capillense produces beautiful, typically pink, flowers, followed by round, green fruits. Once the fruit ripens, it will split open, revealing tiny, black seeds. These are your starting point for a new generation of cacti.
- **Sowing Seeds:** Prepare a seed tray filled with a well-

draining cactus potting mix. Gently press the seeds into the soil, ensuring minimal depth (just a sprinkle of soil on top). Water lightly and cover with a clear plastic wrap or dome to maintain humidity.

- **Germination:** Keep the tray in a warm, bright location (indirect light is best) and be patient. Germination can take anywhere from a week to a few months! Maintain consistent humidity and check the soil moisture regularly.
- **Transplanting:** Once your seedlings have developed their first few true leaves, it's time for a bigger pot! Choose a pot with drainage holes and repot the seedlings individually, ensuring you use a suitable cactus mix.

The Cutting Edge:

- **Selecting Cuttings:** Look for healthy, mature stems on your capillense. A cutting should be at least two inches long.
- **Preparation:** Using a sharp knife or razor blade, make a clean cut at the base of the stem. Allow the cutting to callus over for a few days in a dry, shaded location. This forms a protective layer to prevent rot.
- **Planting:** Once the cutting has calloused, plant it in a pot with cactus mix. Place the cut end into the soil, ensuring it's firm.
- **Watering:** Water sparingly, only when the soil is completely dry to avoid overwatering and root rot.

Important Tips for Success:

- **Light:** This cactus favors bright, indirect light but can tolerate some direct sunlight for short periods. Avoid strong midday sun, especially during the hotter months.
- **Watering:** The capillense is a desert dweller, so it prefers dry conditions. Water sparingly, only when the soil is completely dry. Overwatering can lead to root rot.

- **Fertilizing:** During the active growth period (spring and summer), you can lightly fertilize your plant with a balanced cactus fertilizer once a month.

Patience is a Virtue:

Propagation can be a rewarding experience, but it requires patience and care. Keep in mind that it can take months (or even years) for new capillense plants to develop into their full, adult beauty.

With the right techniques and a touch of green thumb magic, you can successfully propagate your *Gymnocalycium capillense* and share its breathtaking beauty with others. So, get ready to witness the magic of life starting anew, one tiny seed or cutting at a time!