



For the joy of gardening!

Estabrook's

OPUNTIA CARE

LIGHT

Prickly pear and bunny ears cacti need very bright light, usually a sunny south- or west-facing window indoors. Introduce stronger direct sun gradually to prevent scorching. Thin, stretched new pads signal insufficient light. A grow light can supplement a dim winter window.

WATERING

Let the potting mix dry throughout before watering thoroughly. Allow excess water to drain and empty the saucer. During the cool winter rest, water very sparingly, only as needed to prevent excessive shriveling. Constantly damp soil can quickly rot roots and pads.

SOIL

Use a gritty cactus mix that drains freely in a container with drainage holes. Add horticultural grit or perlite if needed. Choose a stable pot just large enough for the root system. Avoid oversized containers that remain wet for long periods.

TEMPERATURE

Warm household temperatures suit active growth. A bright, cooler winter location around 50–65°F can provide a rest period for tender indoor types. Keep away from freezing windows and drafts. Do not assume a houseplant Opuntia is winter-hardy outdoors in Maine.

FERTILIZING

Use a cactus fertilizer at the labeled rate during active growth. Avoid heavy nitrogen feeding that encourages soft growth. Stop fertilizing during the winter rest. Inspect regularly for mealybugs or scale, especially around pad joints and sheltered crevices.

HANDLING

Even apparently spineless pads may carry tiny, barbed bristles called glochids that detach at a touch. Keep out of reach of children and pets. Use suitable cactus-handling tools and protective gloves; avoid direct contact with pads and keep loose bristles away from eyes.