

# Real Estate

## GREEN HOUSE Succulents with spines C.S. Bewli

We have already talked about growing some of the “thorn” less cactus species and gave an option to those cautioned by Vaastu experts to shun cacti because of the negative energy created by the thorns. While the general opinion is that only cacti have thorns, the fact is that there are some succulents also that have spines and resemble cactus plants.



Cacti are a part of a larger group of plants called succulents, therefore all cacti are succulents, but all succulents are not cacti.

It is not the spines of cactus that distinguish it from other succulents, it is the presence of areoles or cushion-like structures in cactus, that are the identification points for a cactus.

Cactus-like succulents are species from different families. They are season-free plants which look fresh and beautiful throughout the year. Selection of these plump and spiny plants can be made from numerous species as they come in different shapes, colours and sizes. Some of them bear the most beautiful flowers in the plant kingdom.



Pachypodiums that, resemble cactus are, in fact, spiny succulents are among the plants that have gained popularity as landscaping plants in the recent years. There are 25 species of this ornamental plant that is much sought after and is highly valued for long lasting and beautiful flowers and some amazing caudices.

Agaves are perhaps the most familiar of all succulents. Their long leathery and fleshy leaves with terminal spines have great longevity and give a cactus-like ornamental look. They make striking landscape plants. Some of the Euphorbia species in succulents having cactus-like spines are milii, horrida, ferox, mammillaris, and grandicornis. These species contain milky sap; many of these species because of their spines look like cactus plants.

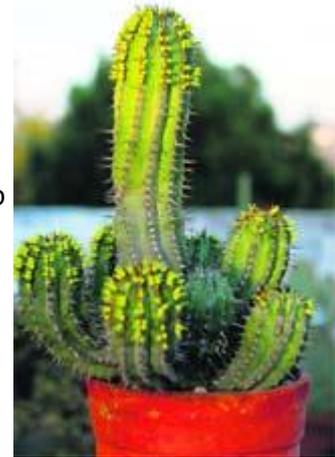
Here we take up Euphorbia milii hybrids and Euphorbia grandicornis which are spiny succulent plants resembling cactus.

## **Euphorbia milii hybrids**

There are many sought after hybrids and cultivars of *Euphorbia milii* which are perennial ornamental flowering bushes that come in a large range of flower colours. The flowers are showy, long lasting and of different sizes. These plants are rugged, compact and almost disease-free. They hardly need any care and grow up to different sizes. In the tricity, there is a craze for such plants with different hues and many of the residents are growing these plants successfully.

The beauty of these plants lies in their multi-utility and can be used as:

- ❖ A border or a hedge
- ❖ An ornamental container plant
- ❖ A landscaping material, planted independently or in a group to give an added colourful flavour to the environment round the year.



### **Growing tips**

**Euphorbia blooms can light up your garden**

- Do not treat these as succulents which need regimentation in watering; these plants are water guzzlers and enjoy doing so and do not die due to overwatering, but tend to remain unhealthy with under watering.
- For profuse flowering all round the year, grow them in full sun.
- Any medium can be used, but these grow best in cactus compost.
- Avoid pruning.
- Fertilise the plants once in growing season with NPK (nitrogen, phosphorous, potash).

## **Euphorbia grandicornis**

It is a South African cactus-like multi-branching slow growing succulent plant. The greenish stems bear 3-4 angular and zigzag ridges decorated with unique spikes resembling the shape of cow's horns. This distinguishing feature has made it ornamental and a collector's choice. In habitat it grows up to 2 metres in height, but in cultivation it reaches upto a metre.

It is a hardy plant, but for profuse flowering place the plant in full sun to partial shade and grow it in free draining compost. Tiny yellow to green flowers appear at the top fresh growth between the spines which are surrounded by small leaves during summers. Prune the plant to keep it in the desired shape and size. Propagation is easily done by the cuttings in late spring to summer.