

CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN ENDANGERED SPECIES
OF WILD FAUNA AND FLORA



Eleventh meeting of the Plants Committee
Langkawi (Malaysia), 3-7 September 2001

Trade in Mexican cacti

CACTUS SALES THROUGH THE INTERNET

1. This document has been prepared by the Scientific Authority of Mexico.
2. 65 per cent of the territory of Mexico is arid or semi-arid, which means that succulents and plants that are specially adapted to deal with drought conditions have found there an area suitable for their speciation and diversification. Among the succulents, cacti play a very important role, from the ecological, aesthetic, economic and social points of view. About 715 species of cacti exist in Mexico, of which almost 80 per cent are endemic to the country, with almost all of the rest being shared with the southern part of the United States or with Central and South America.
3. Cacti play a very important role in the arid and semi-arid systems of Mexico, but they also represent a natural resource which is enormously important in meeting the needs of many people. Many of its fruits and stems are staple foods in the diet of Mexicans. These plants are also used as fodder, for decoration and as a source of chemical substances used in medicine and pharmacology (alkaloids, lecithins, glycosides, etc.).
4. At the last meeting of the Plants Committee (PC10), it was said that there was no significant trade in cacti. In response, Mexico now submits the following contribution with the aim of providing concrete data in this area.
5. Firstly, it is important to note that the export of all species of Mexican Cactaceae has been prohibited since 1934. However, it is known that this plant family is the subject of an extensive illegal export trade.
6. With the support of the Comisión Nacional para el Conocimiento y Uso de la Biodiversidad (CONABIO, *National Commission for Knowledge and Use of Biodiversity*), a half-time assistant has been engaged, who has begun the search, data capture and preparation of a database containing information relating to trade in Mexican Cactaceae via the Internet. The information presented below was generated between March and June 2001.
7. The database created contains 27 fields (see Table 1), and to date 3,791 records have been found with information on 55 genera (see Table 2) and 531 species of Mexican Cactaceae offered for sale. During the meeting of the Plants Committee in Malaysia, Mexico will provide the Secretariat with a complete copy of this database.

8. Taking as the indicator the number of times that the species are offered for sale, Table 3 shows the set of those most in demand.
9. It is estimated that the Internet search to detect cactus sales is 40 per cent completed, which means that at least four or five more months will be needed to finish it.
10. 19 different suppliers, from eight different countries, have been found (see Table 4).
11. The information provided with these sales advertisements varies from case to case, but data on localities are included in 30 per cent of cases.
12. The Mexican Cactaceae offered for sale come from 24 of the 31 States of the Mexican Republic (see Table 5). The States not listed represent the southern and south-eastern part of Mexico, where due to the climatic conditions cacti are not major elements of the vegetation.
13. Generally offered for sale are whole plants, seeds or photographs.
14. The data on the plants generally provided with the sales advertisement for a Cactaceae specimen vary from case to case, but the most common items are presented in Table 6.
15. The prices for a specimen vary widely, but there are specimens of Cactaceae that are sold for between USD 3 and USD 300.
16. Clearly, the information compiled does not give any indication of the volume of specimens sold per unit of time, nor of the species in which there is the greatest trade. It is also clear that it will be difficult for us to obtain additional information in this area.
17. However, taking into consideration that the information obtained to date is only partial, since the Internet search has not been completed, nor has a review been undertaken of the catalogues of commercial nurseries, but also being aware that there are additional suppliers who do not advertise their products by either of these two methods, Mexico takes the view that a significant trade in cacti, or at least a considerable demand for them, does exist at the international level.

Table 1. Fields of the database prepared by CONABIO.

Genus; Species; Author; Category; Subspecies or Variety; Autor_inf.; Synonym found on the net; Comments; Biological status; Common name; Part sold; Shop/Supplier; Country; State; Address; Domain/Internet; Mail; E-mail; Telephone(s); Fax; Price; Form of sale; Place of origin; Characteristics of the plant; Other data; Country of origin; State of origin.

Table 2. Genera of the species offered for sale on the Internet.

<i>Acanthocereus; Acharagma; Ancistrocactus; Aporocactus; Ariocarpus; Astrophytum; Aztekium; Bartschella; Carnegiea; Cephalocereus; Coryphantha; Cylindropuntia; Disocactus; Echinocactus; Echinocereus; Echinomastus; Encephalocarpus; Epiphyllum; Epithelantha; Escobaria; Escontria; Ferocactus; Geohintonia; Glandulicactus; Grusonia; Hylocereus; Leuchtenbergia; Lophocereus; Lophophora; Mammillaria; Mammilloidya; Marginatocereus; Melocactus; Mitrocereus; Myrtillocactus; Neobuxbaumia; Neoevansia; Neolloydia; Obregonia; Opuntia; Ortegocactus; Pachycereus; Pelecypora; Peniocereus; Pereskia; Pilosocereus; Polaskia; Rhipsalis; Selenicereus; Stenocactus; Stenocereus; Strombocactus; Thelocactus; Turbinicarpus; Wilcoxia.</i>
--

Table 3. Species of Cactaceae most frequently advertised for sale on the Internet. Frequency = number of sales records found on the Internet.

Species	App.	Frequency
<i>Ariocarpus retusus</i>	I	79
<i>Echinocereus triglochidiatus</i>	II	68
<i>Turbincarpus schmiedickeanus</i>	I	63
<i>Opuntia polyacantha</i>	II	61
<i>Escobaria vivipara</i>	II	54
<i>Opuntia macrorhiza</i>	II	53
<i>Echinocereus reichenbachii</i>	II	50
<i>Echinocereus viridiflorus</i>	II	48
<i>Astrophytum myriostigma</i>	II	43
<i>Thelocactus bicolor</i>	II	42
<i>Epithelantha micromeris</i>	II	41
<i>Astrophytum capricorne</i>	II	34
<i>Mammillaria heyderi</i>	II	33
<i>Mammillaria magnimamma</i>	II	31
<i>Echinocereus fendlerii</i>	II	30
<i>Ariocarpus kotschoubeyanus</i>	II	29
<i>Echinocactus platyacanthus</i>	II	28
<i>Stenocactus multcostatus</i>	II	27
<i>Thelocactus conothelos</i>	II	26
<i>Opuntia erinacea</i>	II	26
<i>Thelocactus hexaedrophorus</i>	II	26
<i>Ariocarpus fissuratus</i>	I	26
<i>Mammillaria lasiacantha</i>	II	25
<i>Mammillaria haageana</i>	II	24
<i>Astrophytum ornatum</i>	II	24
<i>Mammillaria microcarpa</i>	II	23
<i>Escobaria tuberculosa</i>	II	22
<i>Echinocereus mojavensis</i>	II	22
<i>Ferocactus latispinus</i>	II	21
<i>Turbincarpus pseudomacrochele</i>	I	20
<i>Echinocereus pectinatus</i>	II	20

Table 4. Suppliers selling Cactaceae

Canada:	J & C Greenhouses and Gardenworld	www.cactus4sale.com
	Cusheon Creek Nursery	www.Theamateursdigest.com/cusheon.htm
Denmark:	Benny´s Cactus	www.kaktus.dk/Bennys.htm
Malta:	Cactus Heaven	www.cactus-heaven.com
Mexico:	Cactomania	www.cactus-mall.com/cactomania/index.html
Spain:	Cactus land	www.cactusland.com
Sweden:	Succ Seed	www.algonet.se/~succseed/
United Kingdom	Brookside Nursery	www.brookside-nursery.com
	Chiltern Hills Cacti	www.chilternhillscacti.freemove.co.uk/
	Doug and Vivi Rowland	www.cactus-mall.com/rowland/index.html
	Plantlife	www.plantlifenursery.co.uk/
	Seedling Cacti From Richard & Wendy Edginton	www.cactus-mall.com/rawe/index.html
United States of America:	Mesa Garden	www.mesagarden.com
	Dennis Hoidal Succulent Plants	www.Theamateursdigest.com/dhoidal.htm
	American Desert Plants Inc.	www.desertplants.com
	Cactus Specialties	www.cactus-mall.com/cactus_specialties
	Rare Plant Research	www.Theamateursdigest.com/rareplnt.htm
	Arid Lands Greenhouses	www.aridlands.com
	California Cactus Center	www.cactuscenter.com

Table 5. States of Mexico where the Cactaceae on sale originate.

Aguascalientes; Baja California Norte; Baja California Sur; Chihuahua; Coahuila; Colima; Durango; Guanajuato; Guerrero; Hidalgo; Jalisco; México; Michoacan; Morelos; Nuevo León; Oaxaca; Puebla; Queretaro; San Luis Potosí; Sinaloa; Sonora; Tamaulipas; Veracruz; Zacatecas
--

Table 6. Data generally accompanying the sales advertisement for a Cactaceae specimen.

Characteristics of the plant
Size of the specimens on sale
Description of the prickles
Age
Colour of the flower
In some cases it is noted that they have been artificially propagated
In the case of seeds, the number of seeds per packet is indicated, together with the related cost.