



Plant Conservation Day is a joint project of the Association of Zoological Horticulture Inc. and Botanic Gardens Conservation International.

**Website:** [www.plantconservationday.org](http://www.plantconservationday.org)  
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## Children's Art Activity

### Sponge Cactus Superhero

#### Background information

Cacti are fascinating plants for both kids and adults alike. Their adaptations to life in the desert make them visual curiosities, and their biology is no less intriguing. Many cacti have important conservation stories to tell as well. Of the approximately 1,500 species of cacti, 39 percent are included in the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. Some cacti are critically endangered in their wild habitats, but are quite common in cultivation. Just 50 golden barrel cacti, for example, remain in the wild, while there are 10-15 million of this species in cultivation around the world.

This activity allows children to design their own cactus and turn the plant into a superhero for conservation. It is recommended that you have real cacti available for kids to view and learn about with an educator as part of this activity. The activity could also take place in a desert conservatory or exhibit at your site, if applicable.

#### Materials

For each participant, you will need

- One large rectangular sponge, very slightly damp
- One pair of scissors
- Scraps of cloth or felt
- Glue
- Dark colored permanent markers
- Toothpicks (round-edged) or pipe cleaners.

#### Procedure

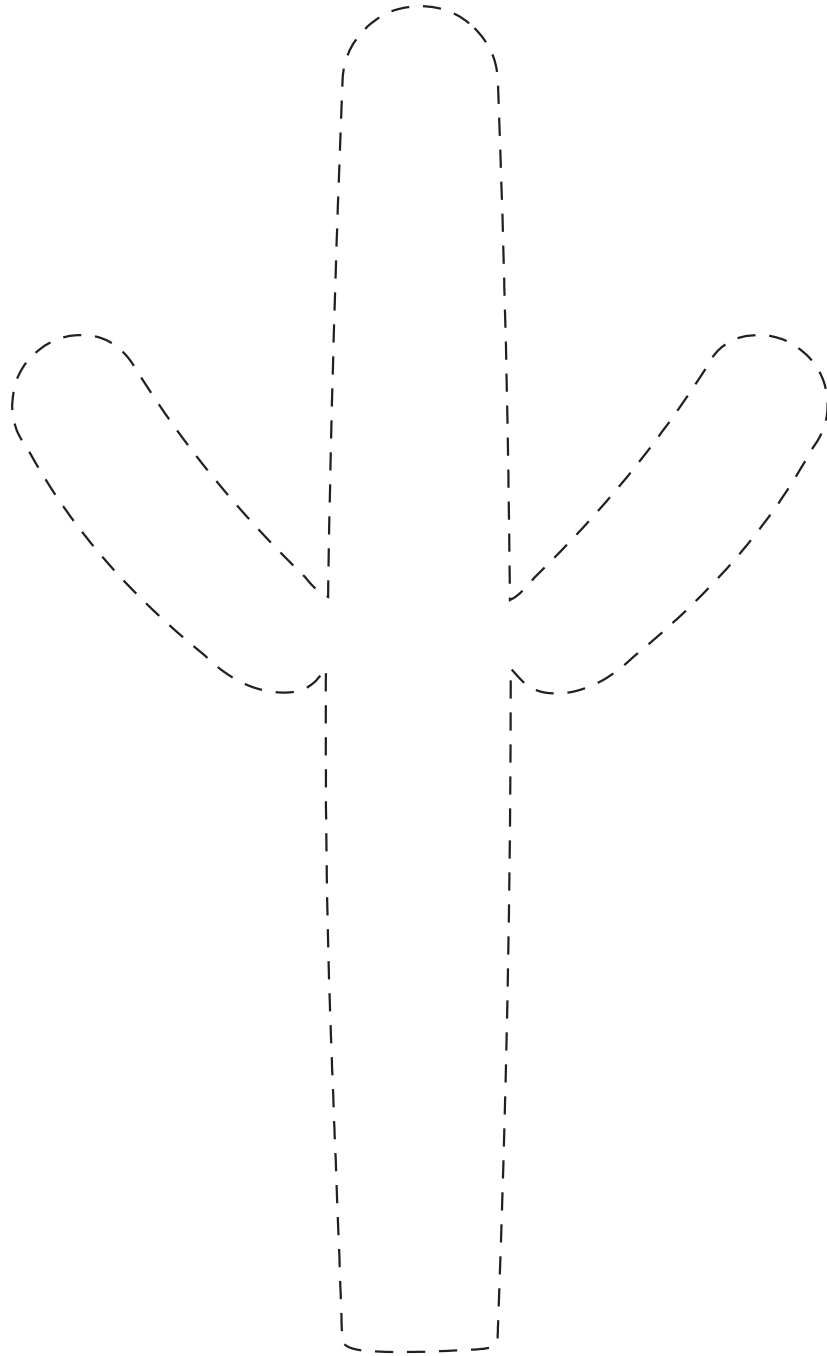
Step 1: Using your imagination, or the drawing on the attached page, cut the sponge into a cactus shape. The attached outline shows a typical saguaro cactus, but you could also create a barrel cactus or other kind of cactus.

Step 2: Use the marker to give your cactus a face. You can also create a face using scraps of cloth and glue.

Step 3: Create clothes for your cactus superhero using the cloth and glue. What are your cactus superhero's special powers, and what clothes do you need to create to help your cactus use those powers? What conservation cause does your superhero fight for?

Step 4: Using toothpicks or pipe cleaners, you can add to the realism of your cactus superhero by creating cactus spines.

**For more art and science activities for kids, visit Planet Plant -- [www.planetplant.org](http://www.planetplant.org)**



Cut along the dotted line.