

Miniature Cacti and Other Succulents – What Are They?

Miniature is an artificial classification – plant taxonomy does not recognize “miniature” as a delineator, but this term is used for plant classes in shows. Miniatures are naturally occurring specimens from a cactus or other succulent genus that normally has larger species. If a mature (= flowering) specimen is quite small in relation to the normal size of other members of the genus, it qualifies as a miniature. If all plants in a genus are naturally “small” at maturity (think *Rebutia*), they would not qualify for this classification. Another restriction is that miniatures cannot be from a monotypic genus, i.e., one that has only one species. In such a case the specimen cannot be compared to larger species in the genus, as there are none.

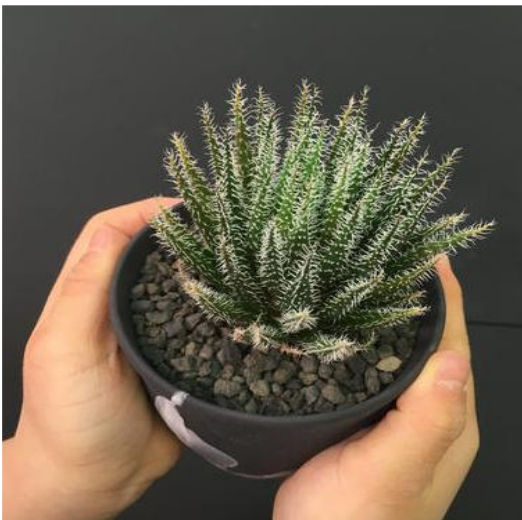
From the description above, a miniature is defined by elimination. There are plants that cannot be miniatures (monotypic genera, small genera). Below is a selection of these as well as a short selection of qualifying miniatures. Again, all this is dependent upon the current taxonomy. The best procedure is to research your plant. If it meets all the criteria (small species in its genus, mature, not a member of a monotypic or small genus member) then it may be a miniature. HINT: Look for species names like *pygmaea*, *liliputana*, *miniscula*, *minima*

Monotypic genera: Cacti - *Obregonia*, *Carnegiea*, *Ortegocactus*, *Leuchtenbergia*
Other succulents – *Fenestraria**, *Lapidaria**, *Welwitschia*, *Brighamia**, *Zamioculcas*

“Small” genera: Cacti - *Frailea*, *Rebutia*, *Sulcorebutia*, *Epithelantha*, *Aztekium*, *Pediocactus*
Other succulents - *Adromischus*, *Anacampseros*, *Avonia*, *Monanthes*, *Titanopsis*, *Ophthalmophyllum*, *Sempervivum*

Selection of qualifying miniatures: *Aloe jucunda*, *A. haworthioides*, *A. bowiea*, *A. descoingsii*, *Haworthia parksiana*, *H. gramifolia*, *H. minima*, *Gasteria bicolor* v. *liliputana*, *Mammillaria saboae*, *M. blossfeldiana*, *M. theresae*, *Echinocereus davisii*, *Copiapoa tenuissima*, *Echeveria minima*, *Crassula ovata* v. *minima*, *C. cremnophila*, *C. tetragona*

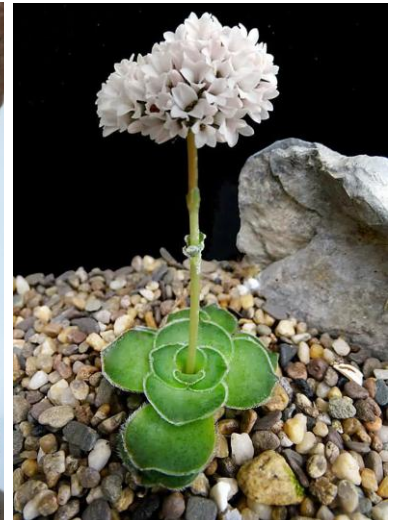
*Many mesembs, bulbs, crassulas, and stapeliads are monotypes.



Aloe haworthioides
Photo: Botan, Tokyo



Mammillaria saboae
Photo: Valentino Vallicelli



Crassula cremnophila
Photo: World of Succulents