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Echinocactus grusonii

GOLDEN BARREL CACTUS is a cactus. Native to central Mexico it has a light green body (stem) with golden-yellow to white spines, and lustrous yellow flowers embedded in the woolly crown.

It is also known as Barrel cactus, *Echinokaktus grusonův* (Czech), Golden ball, Golden barrel, *Goldkugelkaktus* (German), *Ježunka* (Czech), Mother-in-law's chair, Mother-in-law's cushion, *Sedátko pro tchyni* (Czech), *Schoonmīder's stil* (Dutch), and *Svärmorskudde* (Swedish).

The flowers open in full sunlight.

In Mexico this cactus is endangered in the wild.

Grusonii commemorates a German engineer, inventor and entrepreneur, Herman Gruson (1821-1895), who built up a huge collection of cacti and other exotic plants. One year after becoming Technical Director of United Hamburg-Magdeburg Steamboat Shipping Association he established his own engineering business (with its own factory, foundry and wharf) in 1855, H. Gruson Buckau-Magdeburg. This gave him the freedom to invent new civil and military applications for the cast iron improved by his own techniques and his company became one of the largest German armament producers, eventually being taken over by the Krupp family in 1893. Gruson's wealth enabled him to further his great enthusiasm for sub-tropical and tropical plants. His initial greenhouse had become eleven by the time he died and these were given to the people of Magdeburg, the city he had lived and worked in all his life. The greenhouses are still maintained and open to the public today, and contain cacti, ferns, orchids, water lilies, palms and other plants (as well as exotic birds), many of which are endangered.

Golden barrel cactus is said to be a familiar sight in tropical America cultivated as an ornamental plant.