

Adenium Desert Rose Root Rot: How to Save It Now?

Root rot happens when your adenium desert rose plants hold too much water than needed and have no ways for the water to get out. The excess amount of water might attract the bad guys to the party and therefore eat up our plants' roots.

We understand how upsetting this can be. But there are several easy ways to recognize whether your adenium have root rots and how to save them properly. Or better, how to protect your babies from future root rots. Come with us & let's check them out now.

How to Know the Adenium Plants Are Rotting?

[https://files.zenyrgarden.com/Images/Adenium%20Desert%20Rose%20Blog/Post%20\(14\)/adenium-desert-rose-root-rot.jpg](https://files.zenyrgarden.com/Images/Adenium%20Desert%20Rose%20Blog/Post%20(14)/adenium-desert-rose-root-rot.jpg)

Firstly, we can start by looking at the caudex. If you see spots like pimples start popping up, then it may be a sign that there's too much water inside the caudex and the plant is creating exit ways for the water to get out.

Look out for these pimples:

[https://files.zenyrgarden.com/Images/Adenium%20Desert%20Rose%20Blog/Post%20\(14\)/pimples-on-adenium-caudex-branch.jpg](https://files.zenyrgarden.com/Images/Adenium%20Desert%20Rose%20Blog/Post%20(14)/pimples-on-adenium-caudex-branch.jpg)

These are the little gateways that are beginning to burst out because of the turgor pressure (the pressure that makes plants rigid) built up inside of the caudex.

From one grower's experience, these are like the about-to-pop-out roots the plant is automatically triggering as the root parts below may be in trouble. As a self-saving mechanism, it also tells you if the adenium may be rotting.

[https://files.zenyrgarden.com/Images/Adenium%20Desert%20Rose%20Blog/Post%20\(14\)/spots-on-adenium-caudex.jpg](https://files.zenyrgarden.com/Images/Adenium%20Desert%20Rose%20Blog/Post%20(14)/spots-on-adenium-caudex.jpg)

Have a look at the overall caudex shape. If you notice that it is swelling up bigger than usual, then it may also be a sign that something wrong is going on underneath.

Here is a caudex that shows signs of swelling up:

[https://files.zenyrgarden.com/Images/Adenium%20Desert%20Rose%20Blog/Post%20\(14\)/swollen-adenium-caudex.jpg](https://files.zenyrgarden.com/Images/Adenium%20Desert%20Rose%20Blog/Post%20(14)/swollen-adenium-caudex.jpg)

Also, use your hands to gently touch and feel the caudex. Is it too soft or is it too hard? If the caudex is too hard, you know that it has built up a lot of water. And like a balloon and may go burst soon.

Another small sign you can look for is the yellow leaves. When you press down on the leaves multiple times but they won't fall off, it may be root disease that eventually leads to root rot.

[https://files.zenyrgarden.com/Images/Adenium%20Desert%20Rose%20Blog/Post%20\(14\)/adenium-desert-rose-leaves-turning-yellow.jpg](https://files.zenyrgarden.com/Images/Adenium%20Desert%20Rose%20Blog/Post%20(14)/adenium-desert-rose-leaves-turning-yellow.jpg)

What you can do is trace all the way from the leaves, along the branches, and down to the root around that area—just like following the blood veins from your wrist to your heart. Then, you can narrow down where the troubled area might be.

When some roots are rotted, it makes the water and nutrients transportation very weak around that local area. Therefore, with weaker water & nutrients in that area, it may lead to yellow leaves around that part. If you go backwards and trace it back, you may find some rotted roots down there. The rotted root will be black & mushy.

One other way to tell is: when you prune back the adenium branches, the new leaves develop very slowly and small. A healthy plant may sprout 2 weeks after pruning.

This may tell you that the roots are not developing or may be having some challenges pushing nutrients up. It's a good time then to dig your plants up to see if we can save it.

Adenium Root Rot: 7 Ways to Handle

1. Cut the Small Rotted Part Out

[https://files.zenyrgarden.com/Images/Adenium%20Desert%20Rose%20Blog/Post%20\(14\)/slice-adenium-rotted-part.jpg](https://files.zenyrgarden.com/Images/Adenium%20Desert%20Rose%20Blog/Post%20(14)/slice-adenium-rotted-part.jpg)

If the rotted part is small, simply cut it out using a bread knife or some cutting tools you have around your house.

After cutting, apply some cinnamon or garden lime powder onto the cuts. This helps heal the wound and protect the fresh cuts from any potential damages from water or bacteria.

Here is some good garden lime to buy if you're interested: >>> [Garden Lime](#) (Available on Amazon)

2. Cut a Big Chunk of the Root & Caudex Out

[https://files.zenyrgarden.com/Images/Adenium%20Desert%20Rose%20Blog/Post%20\(14\)/applied-garden-lime-powder-on-adenium-root-rot.jpg](https://files.zenyrgarden.com/Images/Adenium%20Desert%20Rose%20Blog/Post%20(14)/applied-garden-lime-powder-on-adenium-root-rot.jpg)

If you see black spots that are quite mushy on the root, just cut them out. To avoid the root from being deformed, you can try cutting the whole thing evenly.

It is a good idea to sterilize your tools with alcohol before doing the surgery. After you cut the rotted root out, use some cinnamon ground, fungicide or lime powder to cover them up.

3. Use a Powerful Garden Hose to Blow Out the Rotted Part

If you don't like cutting up your caudex, you can try using a high-pressure garden hose to blow out the rotted part. Doing it this way saves more of the unaffected part and you don't need to sterilize any tools beforehand.

4. Use a Spoon to Scoop the Rotted Root Out

If you want a gentler approach that can save a lot of your caudex, then try using a spoon to scoop out the damaged part. This method is simple and effective albeit might take a bit more time than the other drastic methods we've seen.

5. Soak the Plant in Fungicide Solution

When digging up your desert roses, try first to soak the plants in a fungicide solution to kill off some harmful bacteria on it. If strong chemicals are not your thing, try something gentler like the lime solution or ginger-garlic-chili solution. Onion also works quite well.

6. Let the Plant Dry Out in the Sun

After cutting out the black parts and applying some protective powder, just lay the plants bare roots outside under the sun for them to heal.

Check your babies every day to see how they are doing. Once the roots have become harder, it is a good time to plant it in the soil again.

7. Replant Your Plant Into New Soil

Once your plants have healed and everything seems more stable now, you can replant them into the soil.

Some growers use root hormone to promote the formation of new roots. Remember to use gloves and wear a mask if you decide to use the root hormones. Even after this replanting, you should check the root system to see what's going on every day.

Don't water your plant just yet. Make sure the soil is nice and dry. Once you see some little strings start shooting out from the root, you know the plants have started showing signs of growth again (it senses some humidity --> it shoots out fine string roots). And this means they're okay and they like their new home.

At this time, begin watering them lightly. When they grow stronger, increase the water and nutrients amounts.

You Just Saved One Desert Rose

[https://files.zenyrgarden.com/Images/Adenium%20Desert%20Rose%20Blog/Post%20\(14\)/result-of-saving-desert-rose-root-rot.jpg](https://files.zenyrgarden.com/Images/Adenium%20Desert%20Rose%20Blog/Post%20(14)/result-of-saving-desert-rose-root-rot.jpg)

And with those easy steps, you can save your rotted adenium desert rose and bring it back to life again. The plant, like every other thing on Earth, strives for survival. It won't be knocked out easily.

When you know how to get rid of the bad guys and deal with rots properly, your plants will grow stronger and more resilient than ever before. Keep every desert rose on this planet alive! See you again next time.

Growing Adenium Without Root Rot: Another Way

Although growing adenium in soil may create root rot sometimes, a grower observes that when grown in water only, the adenium root is much less likely susceptible to rotting.

This way of growing is more suitable for smaller adenium or seedlings. Because it's easier to find a fit sized pot of water to contain their roots. Bigger adenium can be applied with this method; however the size for their water pot may be up to a small bathtub. People play this water-grown adenium style for small adenium bonsai.

You can follow the steps here for an easy getting-started:

[https://files.zenyrgarden.com/Images/Adenium%20Desert%20Rose%20Blog/Post%20\(14\)/growing-adenium-in-water.jpg](https://files.zenyrgarden.com/Images/Adenium%20Desert%20Rose%20Blog/Post%20(14)/growing-adenium-in-water.jpg)

This is the result before rooting & after rooting in water:

[https://files.zenyrgarden.com/Images/Adenium%20Desert%20Rose%20Blog/Post%20\(14\)/before-after-rooting-in-water-adenium.jpg](https://files.zenyrgarden.com/Images/Adenium%20Desert%20Rose%20Blog/Post%20(14)/before-after-rooting-in-water-adenium.jpg)

If you decide to try this style of rooting adenium in water, here are a few points you can take note of:

- Use clean water for good results
- Cap the bottle (leaving an open space for the adenium branch to go through). Leave the other space closed so mosquitoes won't find & lay eggs inside. E.g. use a Styrofoam cap
- Use 3-4 drops of liquid fertilizer for the roots to grow well. Avoid using too much fertilizer because it will cause the growth of algae. Change the water if algae develops.
- Place the adenium in morning sunlight or afternoon sunlight for photosynthesis. Avoid strong noon sunlight as it may heat up the water & cause root burning.

If you would like to learn more about liquid fertilizers or EM (effective microorganisms) for the adenium, here are some good articles to get started:

[EM \(Effective Microorganisms\) Plant Liquid: How to Make At Home](#)

- Rooting & leafing stage: [Nitrogen Rich Fertilizer \(with EM\)](#)
- Flowering stage: [Liquid Phosphorous Fertilizer](#) | [Liquid Potash Fertilizer](#)

Thank you & See you again next time at the garden!

Thanks to:

- [Hoa Su Giau Mai](#)
- [Trinh Khoi Hoa Su](#)
- [Hoa Su Kim Thu Binh Duong](#)
- [Hoa su tay ninh](#)
- [Hong Quan \(Adenium Plant In Water\)](#)