

Succulents are Sexy

Bill Hendricks

Succulents have reached a new high in popularity

They come in a wide range of colors including blue.

They are easy to grow and care for.

Simple to grow and propagate.

Require minimal maintenance.

Range in size from ground covers to trees.

Geometric shapes.

What is a succulent?

Succulents are plants that have the ability to store water within their leaves, stems or roots.

What are cacti?

Cacti are a distinct family in which all species are succulent. On the other hand, over 50 families of plants contain succulent members.

Succulents can be used in many ways

Containers & dish gardens

Trough Gardens

Hanging baskets

Hanging Gardens

Wreaths

As annuals in the garden

Hardy forms can be used for

low water use gardens

roof gardens

rock and alpine gardens

Popular as favors for weddings and showers

Potting media - A well drained mix is very important.

Use a quality commercial mix that is porous and will not hold excess moisture.

(Ex. Black Gold brand)

Mix your own media:

Remember, peat does not wet easily when dry.

Start with a choir based media such as Metro 360 c or Pro-Mix 40CC.

For additional drainage:

coarse perlite

pumice

coarse sand

small gravel

It is best to repot in spring when plants start to actively grow. Succulents prefer to be pot bonded or in community pots. Do not use over sized pots when repotting.

Water - Too much water kills succulents!

Water thoroughly and allow plants to dry between watering.

Reduce watering when plants are dormant.

Remember, large pots tend to dry more slowly than small pots.

Fertilizer – Do not over feed

Fertilize at ½ the recommended rate from April to September.

Light – Most all succulents want sun or bright light but some will adapt to lower light situations such as an east or west window or when more than 4' from a south facing window.

Plants for sunny or bright light locations

Cacti

Burro's Tail (*Sedum morganianum*)

Aloe (many new dwarf hybrids)

Medicine or Burn Aloe (*Aloe vera*)

Plants indirect light

Jade plant (*Crassula ovata*)

Haworthia (100's of forms)

Gasteria

Sansevieria

Growing under lights

Provide at least 14 hours of light.

Temperature – Home temperatures are adequate for succulents. Most desert cacti prefer a cold winter between 40 and 50° to stimulate spring and summer bloom.

Propagation

There are many ways of multiplying succulents: stem cuttings, leaf cuttings, division, seeds, grafting, etc. Which method works on which plants is however variable: it's best to check out the plant's particulars on-line or in a book about succulents before proceeding.

Pests and diseases

Mealybug can affect both the tops of plants as well as attack the roots.

Scale can be very difficult to control.

Root rot and stem rot can be caused by a whole range of common diseases and are best controlled by not overwatering and by avoiding excess humidity.

Take your plants outside for the summer.

Visit Midwest Cactus and Succulent Society
on Facebook and at mwcss.com
Central Ohio Cactus and Succulent Society
on Facebook and at columbuscactusclub.com