

# Fun With Succulents

If you are new to gardening, whether indoor or outdoor, succulents are great plants to start with. By following a few simple guidelines (like ensuring proper lighting, water and soil conditions), they are some of the easiest plants to grow!

Succulents are thick, fleshy plants that are capable of storing water in their leaves and/or stems for long periods of time. This enables them to go quite a while between waterings and allows them to be classified as drought-tolerant plants. A well-draining succulent soil is crucial for success and since most succulents require full sun, it is important to take a look at the area where you want them to live to see how much light they would receive throughout the day. It is also beneficial to fertilize your succulents during the spring and summer months.

While most succulents prefer to be on the dry side, there are some varieties that can take more moist conditions. Some examples of outdoor succulents that can handle more water are Sempervivums (Hens & Chicks), and a couple of Sedums called 'Angelina' and 'Blue Spruce.' Indoor plants that can handle more frequent watering include Zygo (Christmas Cactus), Albuca spiralis (Frizzle Sizzle), Rhipsalis (Mistletoe Cactus), and Portulaca molokiniensis (Ihi).

All succulents would do best in a shallow container that will not hold excess water in the soil. When planting hardy succulents in the ground, ensure the soil drains well. We have very wet winters in our area, so placing succulents in an area that does not puddle is key.

**An important note to remember: It is easy to kill succulents by overwatering! Be sure the soil dries out between waterings.**

The process of taking care of plants, including succulents, has been proven to help improve one's concentration, memory and focus. Some succulents can even provide health benefits as well as air purification, such as Aloe Vera.

Succulents have become very popular as tabletop centerpieces, planters, mixed arrangements, and party favors for baby showers, weddings and more. They are also very easily propagated, which makes them cost effective. Just put a piece on top of some soil and wait for it to sprout roots!

# Planting a Succulent Container

**Container:** Select a container that is shallow and has a drainage hole. You can purchase a shallow plant pot or get creative! You can use just about anything if it holds soil, can handle some moisture and have a hole drilled in the bottom.

**Soil:** Use a well-draining mix, such as E.B. Stone Cactus & Succulent soil.

**Fertilizer:** Fertilize your succulents when they are actively growing in spring and summer - Espoma Cactus is a great fertilizer option that we carry!

**Top Dressing:** After planting your succulents, you can decorate with things that do not promote moist conditions. Avoid adding moss, but have fun with pea gravel rocks, crushed glass, marbles, or anything that will not leach anything harmful into the soil. You could even add your favorite figurines!

**Plants:** Combine succulents that like the same care. Choose either all indoor or all outdoor varieties. You can pick whatever plants you like together as long as they can all thrive in the same conditions.

**Thriller, Filler, Spiller:** Many people are familiar with the concept of using a combination of thrillers (tall or upright), fillers (medium height or mounding), and spillers (ground cover or trailing) to design a container garden. This can pertain to succulent containers as well! You can choose one of each in order put a trio together. In a larger planting vessel, you might wish to add more plants to your arrangement.

For a centered design, put tall plants in the center, medium plants around those, and some trailing plants along the edges.

If you plan to view your creation from only one side, put your thrillers in the back and then stair-step your way to the front. Place your fillers in the center with your trailing plants along the front edge.

**Have fun with it!** Ultimately, this is *your* succulent arrangement. Thinking about thrillers, fillers and spillers can be helpful when designing, but it is not a rule! If you want to plant a collection of Echeveria together, do it! If you would like to grow one larger plant in an old shoe, drill a couple holes in the bottom and plant it! What else can you find with drainage? An old colander or an Easter Basket? The sky is the limit!