

SUCCULENTS

Care and Maintenance

Reasons to love—So many succulents, so little time!

- Forgiving and easy to grow
- Drought tolerant
- Great gifts
- Variety – many sizes, shapes, colors, textures
- Low cost

Soil—Succulents need well-aerated and fast draining soil.

- Pots – 2/3 potting mix and 1/3 pumice or perlite
- Ground – Add plenty of non-organic material to aid drainage; mound soil.
- Fertilizer – Use low nitrogen fertilizer to reduce pests. Too much nitrogen will entice pests to tender new foliage.
- Pots – Mix in time-release fertilizer at time of planting.
- Ground – No fertilizer needed.

Choosing pots—Finding the right pot is part of the adventure.

- Consider thrift stores for variety and low cost.
- Containers need to have a hole in the bottom.
- Glazed or plastic to hold moisture in; unglazed and terracotta dry quickly.
- Shallow is best for most succulents but not all.

Water—When in doubt, DON'T.

- Use a water meter to be sure.
- If the pot becomes too dry, soak pot in a pail to rewet.
- In ground, water sparingly.

Light—Many succulents are not desert plants. Protect them.

- Put in filtered light to protect from sunburn.
- In ground succulents can take more sun.
- Indoor succulents need filtered light and consider rotating them with outside pots.

Pests—Watch for pests, especially in spring when tender new growth appears.

- The most common pests are aphids, mealy bugs and spider mites.
- Keep a hand sprayer with least toxic formula handy.
- When exchanging plants, check plant carefully for pests or weeds.
- DO NOT share compromised plants.

Tools—Keep them clean with disinfectant spray and lubricant

- Sharp scissors
- Screen to place inside bottom of pot
- Latex gloves for fine work
- Hand pruners
- Chopsticks to make hole for cuttings
- Spoon
- Spray bottle with pest spray
- Small brush to clean leaves
- Needle-nose pliers
- Tweezers
- Disinfectant to clean tools
- Lubricant to protect from moisture

Propagation—The addiction begins!

Reasons to propagate

- Multiply your collection
- Share plants
- Use pieces left after pruning
- Save money

How to prepare cuttings

Remove leaves from lower section.

Allow cut to air dry.

Cut Aeonium or Echeveria with short stems.

Fat leaves can be propagated directly.

Many succulents are able to reverse the flow of growth from their leaves and stems to their roots causing air roots to form.

Potting with cuttings – Cuttings can be planted in six-packs or ‘nursery’ pots.

Place a piece of screen at the bottom of the pot.

Fill soil to the top and mix in time-release fertilizer.

Water and add more soil.

Use chopstick to make holes for cuttings.

Keep cuttings on the dry side for a month.

Use pumice to prop stems upright.

Sedums require roots.

Long stems of Aeonium laid horizontally in soil will produce many new plants.

Do not use stems of blooming plants.

Use a soft paint brush to brush off flecks of soil inside the leaves after planting.

Protect succulents from snails in winter and spring by using: sharp sand mulch, Liquidamber seed heads as mulch, copper strips around the pot rim, deep overhead watering to bring snails up for air, or place pots on a rough, high workbench, dry wooden table, or rough wooden flat.

Succulents can be used in garden beds that are only temporary as they can be easily moved.

Save plastic containers with unusual shapes to use as inserts for pots and create drainage.

Poke holes in the bottom of the inserts.

Display—Help pots and plants to say, “*Look at me!!!*”

- An upside down pot as a stand
- Small bench
- Candle stand
- Plate for an Aeonium rosette
- Vase with no water
- Rotate pots indoors

uccemg.com hotline@uccemg.com

The University of California prohibits discrimination or harassment of any person in any of its programs or activities. (Complete nondiscrimination policy statement can be found at <http://ucanr.org/sites/anrstaff/files/107734.doc>) Inquiries regarding the University's equal employment opportunity policies may be directed to Linda Marie Manton, Affirmative Action Contact, University of California, Davis, Agriculture and Natural Resources, One Shields Avenue, Davis, CA 95616, (530) 752-0495.