



Succulents - Right Plant Right Place

Succulents are a beautiful and low-maintenance option for gardeners, regardless of size.

They are a great option for individuals who want to enjoy plants' beauty without worry because they may flourish with little maintenance and care.

Even though they are popular houseplants, there are both tender and hardy varieties suited to outdoor cultivation in USDA Hardiness Zones ranging from 7 to 12. Frost-hardy types grow well in Zones 7 to 9, while tender species thrive in the hottest Zones, 10 to 12.

Succulent garden design should consider the location, soil type, configuration, moisture level, and the types of plants. Some succulents are more drought tolerant than others. Do a little research on the wide variety of succulent shapes and sizes before starting a succulent garden outside.

You'll need a location with full sun to part shade for growing. Afternoon shade is beneficial if your locale is especially hot in the summer. Choose a location with full sun to part shade. Leave room for spreading. Create mounds/slopes in the garden for improved drainage/frost protection for the succulents.

Most succulent varieties grow well in full sun with mid afternoon shade. Sunlight makes for happy succulents that exude health through their plump and colorful leaves. Too little sunlight will cause succulents to reach awkwardly for sunlight, resulting in spindly, blanched and unbalanced plants.

Growing a succulent garden outside starts with plant choices. If you are a novice, begin with plants that are easy and foolproof. Sedum and sempervivum are easy to grow and adaptable to bright, sunny locations or even slightly dappled areas.

Growing Tips. Succulents grow well when you remember to:

- Provide sandy, well-draining soil
- Choose a location with full sun to part shade
- Leave room for spreading
- Choose companions with similar cultural requirements
- Mound the soil to avoid rotting

- Water infrequently and deeply

And finally, succulents are light feeders that don't require fertilizer. Feed them sparingly, if at all.

DORMANCY - is a period in an organism's life cycle when growth, development, and (in animals) physical activity are temporarily stopped. **Dormancy** is a kind of armored sleep that plants go through. A plant, bud, or seed that is "dormant" is not visibly active.

This is typically done to conserve energy during the colder months of the year or to protect itself from adverse environmental conditions. For some succulents the dormant period (when they grow less) will occur during winter time, while others enter dormancy in the summer. Succulent dormancy is triggered by a few things in their natural habitat. A decrease in sunlight and temperature are a couple of things that succulents take notice of. They realize it is not going to get the elements they need to actively grow, and decide to run on "energy-efficient" mode. When a succulent goes dormant, it requires little water. It will still need sunlight to keep its compact shape, and a fast draining soil to stay dry.

Is my Plant Dormant or Dead?

When some succulents go dormant they look like they are completely dead. They scale back on all their foliage and die back. But that doesn't necessarily mean they are dead. The best thing to do is check the roots of your plants in the garden or in pots. If you notice the roots are rotted out or completely shriveled up and dried out - the plant is dead. But if you notice the roots are healthy - the plant is just hibernating and will bounce back more lush than ever when it's time.

WATERING

For your outside succulents you will want to water them about once a week. 'From spring to fall, during the period of active growth, these plants should be watered once every seven to 10 days. In winter, when the light day becomes shorter, some succulents go into dormancy, so you don't need to water them more than once every three to four weeks.

How often do you water outdoor succulents? The soil should approach dryness, but not stay dry for long periods of time. Water thoroughly to soak the roots and flush salts. Let soil go nearly (not completely) dry between waterings. An accidental overwatering during warm, dry weather won't harm most succulents providing the soil is fast-draining.

TEMPERATURE

When most people think of succulents, they think of desert plants. While it's true that cacti (which are succulents) thrive in the desert, this is not always the case for all succulents. Most succulents prefer the temperature to stay between 60 and 90 degrees.

Succulents that are in the ground naturally stay cooler because the ground doesn't heat up as quickly as the soil in pottery planters. Newly planted succulents will still need some shade or protection to keep them cool as they begin to take root in the ground. Once their roots are more established however, they will be much more likely to tolerate high temperatures. An interesting side effect of direct sunlight on some succulents is called "blushing" – the leaves will change color, sometimes to a deep red.

Another option is to simply place your succulents in an area that gets bright shade for most of the day. Ideally, they'll be in an area with an hour or two of morning sun, but then shaded the rest of the day. Since the temperatures are generally higher in the afternoon, direct sunlight during this time can be problematic and likely to cause sunburn.

How do you protect succulents in the ground in the winter? Add a layer of gravel around the succulents' roots. This will provide some protection from frost, but will also stop your succulents' leaves from drooping into wet soil, which will increase the chance of rot infecting the plant.

Eventual Size of succulents grown outdoors

Do succulents grow bigger in the ground? In moderate climates succulents will take advantage of the space they have available and will grow to the maximum size for their variety. Some of the species sprawl and can easily cover 1 foot of an area. Some succulents may be kept small with routine trimming, others might need more room to grow to their full potential.

Succulents can handle fairly tight quarters better than most plants, but eventually, they'll start to compete for resources, including water and soil nutrients. So don't cram them too close together. Remember, only plant succulents with other plants that have the same water and care needs.

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