

THE BOTANIC NURSERY

Atworth Wiltshire SN12 8NU



SUCCESS WITH SUCCULENTS

Succulents cover a wide range of different plants; they are easy care for a sunny windowsill or the outdoor table. Very little watering is required they are very drought tolerant and prefer the soil to be dry before watering.

In botany a succulent is a plant with thick fleshy leaves that store water, cacti are also succulents but they store their water in their stem and have areoles, from which their spines develop.

The Latin word from which Succulents come is 'sucus' meaning juice or sap. Houseplants are known to aid the air purity and succulent's have their own term called Crassulacean Acid Metabolism this is where the plants close their stomata (the tiny holes often unseen in the epidermis of the plant) during the day, and take up Co2 at night, when the air temperature is lower, this helps them conserve water and in the process aids our air to some extent. So beneficial for wellbeing.



Compost:

Choose a pot with drainage holes especially if outside where you cannot control the watering, indoors so long as you are careful not to overwater you can use any decorative pot or container. Place a layer of small gravel in the base of the pot before adding the compost. You can use any multipurpose compost and add around 40% gravel, or a mix of gravel and perlite, for added drainage. Just because they don't need high nutrient compost doesn't mean you can ignore potting on, so change the compost annually in spring.

Position:

Most Succulents need as much light and sun as you can give them. They will also grow happily outside and if the drainage conditions are really good they might survive over winter. Better still a cold glasshouse or sunny windowsill will be ideal in winter, as long as they are dry.

Water:

Succulents natural habitats often get heavy, but infrequent, downfalls of rain. So allowing your plants to dry out between watering mimics this and is what they like. Plants grown outside usually will never need artificial watering, rain even in high summer will be sufficient.



Propagation:

Many succulents such as Sempervirens and Echeveria produce lots of small plants clustered around the parent, these little ones are known as pups and can easily be removed to make more, in fact they often fall off without any help. So take the little side pup and trim any long root tendrils and firmly press into a new pot of gritty succulent compost and leave alone until rooted.

Other succulents like Kalanchoe, Senecio and many more can be propagated by gently pulling a leaf stem off, allowing the tear to heal for 24 hours and then place that in gritty compost firmly and leave alone until new roots start to form.



Echeveria

Popular succulents of the Americas, named after an 18th century Mexican botanical artist Atanasio Echeverria y Godoy. They have striking neat spiral rosettes and other sorts are more bushy and give height to the display, with a wide range of shapes and colours. They grow from spring into the

autumn and will flower in this period, in the winter they become dormant so you can tidy up any old leaves at the base and remember not to water them during this time, or if indoors only very occasionally.



Sempervirens



Means 'Ever Alive' all are hardy and easy in cultivation. There are many species and forms of houseleeks all native to dryer parts of Eastern Europe; with a long history of use in herbal medicine, often planted on house roofs where they were believed to ward off witches.



They are very collectable, different forms either potted into individual pots or arranged in a mini garden in a pot or any container, makes for interesting and unique displays. Why not try using an old shoe, a piece of damaged china or kitchen equipment.



In 2021 we will be running workshops in our new garden school. Lots of topics to choose from including Succulents - the making and care of little gardens, and living wreaths.

To find out more or register interest email office@botanicnursery.co.uk