

# GROWING SUCCULENTS OUTDOORS

Even in the Pacific Northwest it's possible to have an outdoor succulent garden. Provide EXCELLENT drainage; either in a container or in the ground. If in the ground, a good way to provide fast drainage is to plant in a raised area and include lots of very coarse sand in the planting medium. This enables the plants to cope with our heavy winter rainfall. Succulents do well in containers, even very shallow ones. Most succulents suitable for outdoor gardens here require full sun and are drought tolerant though there are a few exceptions. Most are native to exposed mountain slopes at elevations from 1500 to 13,000 feet. The following do very well in the Pacific Northwest.

**SEMPERVIVUM:** Commonly called hens and chicks, they come in many foliage combinations. There are several hundred species and varieties in cultivation. All are hardy to at least 5 degrees and some to subzero. In spring they produce offsets (chicks) which can be left in place or removed and rooted in a new spot. After flowering, the parent plant dies and is replaced by the chicks. Be sure to let them dry out between waterings and grow them in full sun.

**HUEFFELII:** These plants are very like sempervivums in looks and culture but they differ in 2 major ways; the parent plant does not die after flowering and the offsets will not start reliably by removing them and trying to root them. . The plant must be divided and each division must include a part of the stem and main root. This genus includes varieties which have chartreuse/yellow coloring which none of the sempervivums do. These need protection from the midday sun on the hottest days. The rest are best in full sun.

**SEDUM:** Many are cold hardy in the Pacific Northwest. Several are even native here. Most are more tolerant of extra water than the semps and the hueffellis. Try any of the *Sedum spathifolium*s, *S. hispanicum*, *s. kamtschaticum* or *S. reflexum* and there are lots more. Most do best with at least half day sun.

**RAOULIA AUSTRALIS:** This plant is from the mountains of New Zealand. They're used to rainfall totals similar to ours but lasting throughout the year. This plant is NOT drought tolerant and can be tricky to grow in combination with other succulents since it needs much more water than most of them will tolerate. It needs full sun.

The preceding does not include every succulent which will thrive in our area and there are many half-hardy succulents deserving of a trial, especially in a slightly warmer microclimate or underneath a clear roof,, such as the echeverias and the aeoniums.

EXPERIMENT AND HAVE FUN!

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