

GROWERTALKS

Culture Notes

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Being Successful with Succulents

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Understanding the basic biology and plant needs is where EuroAmerican starts when learning how to be successful with a new product. Although succulents are not new for us, we constantly seek to learn more about these strange yet beautiful plants from industry experts.

It's well known that succulents are the desert survivalists of the plant world. They're most often found in hot arid environments—places that few plants and animals can survive. Succulents evolved to adapt to their surroundings by storing moisture in their stems, roots and leaves. They respire at night and take in most of their water before the sun is even up. This adaptation is what truly makes succulents unique. Here are some tips we recommend for a successful succulent growing experience.

Growing tips

- * When transplanting a liner into a pot, be cautious of the soil. We recommend using a well-drained soilless media with perlite. A 70-30 ratio, respectively, is most often used.
- * Be mindful of the shallow root systems. Aloes, agaves, crassula and many more have very shallow root systems. When transplanting into a larger container, try and give the plants more horizontal room than vertical. If placed into a container with too much soil, it can slow down overall growth. After transplant, do not allow the soil to become completely dry until the plants are established.
- * Do not overwater. Allow soil to almost dry out completely between irrigations once established. Avoid watering mid-day. The plant won't be using the water at that time, and if exposed to high light, this could cause burning on the leaves.
- * Be aware that most succulents like agave, haworthia, echeveria and nematanthus are slow growing. They may take months to grow a few inches.
- * When fertilizing, it's common to think succulents need nothing to little. They can survive with low/no additional fertilizer, but this isn't recommended. By feeding your succulents with small regular doses of N and K, you'll see your succulents thrive. Avoid fertilizer with heavy P—too much can damage your plants.

Exposure

* Most aeonium, aloe, agave, crassula, cotyledon, kalanchoes, sedum, echeveria, manfreda, graptosedum, senecio, haworthia, delosperma and many others prefer full to part sun.

* For the full sun-loving succulents, you're looking for exposures of 6,000 to 10,000 foot candles. This can enhance leaf color. Manfreda and mangave are a great example of this. The higher the light exposure, the more vivid the purple, burgundy and/or pink freckling will be.

* There are some part to full shade-loving succulents, too. Nematanthus, bromeliads and even some aloes and agaves enjoy lower light levels, ranging from 500 to 3,000 foot candles.

* Make sure you read the tag or label in order to better understand what each variety needs. **GT**

(To see the chart for this article, [go to the digital edition](#) and go to page 40.)

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