

# Plant succulents for low-maintenance

Now is the time of year to focus on outdoor landscaping projects. One popular project involves redesigning the front yard or backyard to include an array of different flowers and foliage. While many people gravitate to the flashy and colorful annuals on display at nurseries and home centers, you may want to consider adding some succulents to your home landscape.

Succulent plants can be a boon to a homeowner without the time or



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resources to maintain plants. Succulents get their name from their primary function, which is drawing up and storing water. Succulents are able to thrive in arid conditions, and there are more than 300 different types, including some exotic species.

The advantages to planting succulents are many. Because they store water in their stems, roots and leaves, this reduces the number of times an owner must water them. Succulents can go several days between waterings. Succulents, like cacti, that have few if any leaves, are perhaps best at managing water because they lose little to evaporation through the foliage.

Succulents are particularly good to have in areas prone to arid temperatures or where water restrictions are often in place. They can be environmentally friendly because of their ability to conserve water. Succulents treat water as a precious resource, and their entire makeup is designed to minimize consumption of water.

Because they thrive in sunlight, succulents can be the ideal plants to put in extremely sunny and hot locations. They will not wither and dry out due to extreme heat. For particularly dry areas of landscape or where soil is subpar, consider the placement of different varieties of succulents to create a varied and eye-catching display.

There are many other advantages to planting succulents; some of which include:

- Succulents offer contrasts in shape, texture and colors. With the many varieties, you're bound to find something interesting and different to add to the landscape.
- Whether you have ample acreage in the yard or simply some containers available for planting, succulents will thrive. They grow just as well in containers as they do in the ground.
- Succulents don't tend to require pruning or cutting back of the plant. With this in mind, you can expect them to grow large. Therefore, space the plants adequately to allow for growth.
- Succulents are perennials. So once you plant them, they should last for years and years without the hassle and expense you can expect from planting annuals every year.
- Indoor greenhouses or sunrooms can be another good place for succulents. They prefer not to get chilled, which makes a controlled environment advantageous.

When considering a spot for your succulents, choose areas that get plenty of sun. Think about pruning back or removing trees that would create too much shade on the succulents. Space the succulents widely apart -- more so than you would with other plants -- to allow them to spread. Pebbles or gravel make good mulching material around succulents so that drainage will be adequate. It will also set the succulents apart from other plants by contextualizing them in your garden.

Visit a gardening center or home improvement store to learn more about the myriad types of succulents that can add beauty to most gardens.