

Propagation Workshop – OGC Horticulture Committee
Succulent Propagation
9/2 & 9/3/2020

By Dena Raffel

The word succulent originates from the Latin word *sucus*, which means sap. Succulents typically have sap-filled leaves, this provides nourishment when there is none. This sap also makes it so that you do not need to fertilize or water often. All cactus are succulents, but all succulents are not cactus! There are over 60 succulent families (including aloe, haworthia, sedum, and cacti) and over 10,000 plant varieties. Succulents are generally pest resistant plants. The chalky substance that is often found on the leaves is a natural sun protector.

Some succulents are summer growers (May-Aug) and others are winter growers (Nov-Feb). Most thrive in the spring and fall. It is best not to re-pot during the plant's dormancy (although we do it regularly with good success).

Propagating succulents is an easy way to add to your collection of succulents. You can propagate from your own succulents or from your friend's! You can use succulents in your garden, in crafts, or in flower arranging.

In general, succulents prefer to be in well-drained soil, in bright light, protected from frost, kept warm and on the dry side. Three to four hours of sun a day is enough for succulents. Haworthia is one of the few succulents that can survive in full shade. Watering once a week during the growing season, and once a month during dormancy is a good rule of thumb. If you are not sure if you should water, don't!

Propagating is a simple process although some plants are easier than others. We will go over four methods for succulent propagating including stem cuttings, offsets, branch cutting, and leaf cuttings. Once repotted, give the plant plenty of bright light and a little water. It will root itself in its new planter in about four weeks.

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1. STEM CUTTING Jade Plant *Crassula ovata* 'Tricolor'

Jade is a branching shrub with stout stems. This tri-color jade has rounded bright green leaves variegated with creamy yellow and white. Jade is very drought tolerant. To propagate from a stem cutting cut off along a stem that has reached out either from maturity or lack of sunlight. Allow the cutting to heal for a few days, then repot. Spring/summer grower.



2. OFFSETS OR “PUPS” Aloe Vera *Barbadensis* Miller'

This aloe has been valued for its healing sap since ancient times. Be sure only to use the gel from this variety. The gel works straight from the plant as a soothing salve for burns, cuts and scrapes. You can cut the spear and rub the gel on your wound or split the spear and lay the open side against your wound. Everyone should have this aloe in their garden!

The offsets are little succulents that have sprouted up at the base of the mother plant. To remove the offsets either gently pull them off the main plant preserving their roots if they have developed or by making a clean cut at the base of the offset where it meets the mother plant. Brush off any excess soil then let heal for a few days and repot. Spring/summer Grower.



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3. BRANCH CUTTING Aeonium Haworthii ‘Pinwheel Rose’

This is a freely branching succulent. Flowers appear in the late Spring above the foliage in a cluster, and are usually a very pale yellow. To propagate from a branch cutting, choose a stem that is relatively short to ensure active growth. Cut cleanly from parent plant. Let the branch heal for a few days then repot. Winter grower.



4. LEAF CUTTING Ghost Plant Graptopetalum paraguayense

In this method you remove a healthy leaf from a mature plant and use it to grow a new plant. Succulents that have plump flesh leaves, work the best for this method. To remove a healthy leaf from the base of a plant either gently twist it off or cut it off with a sharp knife. Be sure that you remove the entire leaf and that it is undamaged. Let the leaf end heal over for several days. Once the leaf has healed lay it on top of a pot filled with moist soil. Spray/mist your leaves when the soil gets dry. Keep the leaves out of direct sunlight, but in bright light. In about four weeks, little roots and leaves will begin to sprout. When the original leaf turns brown and falls off you will have the beginning of your new little succulent. It may take several more months before it gets big enough to repot.



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Ruth Bancroft has a great succulent potting mix, if you prefer to make your own, here is my recipe:

3 parts potting soil

2 parts coarse sand (turface or poultry grit)

1 part perlite (or pumice)

Store in an airtight container.