

SummerWinds Nursery *Create A Succulent Dish*



Learn how to create a succulent bowl or container that will stop people in their tracks. They are sure to ask, “Did you make that beautiful succulent arrangement”. You will beam with pride and tell them how you did it. Succulent bowls or containers will create interest and look amazing on a patio, deck or your house entrance.

There are so many different types of succulents that provide unique form, texture and color and of course interest. They are easy to take care of requiring little water and maintenance. Succulents provide year-round interest and look great for months on end.

Succulents do best with at least four or more hours of sun, however succulents need protection from areas that have hot afternoon sun.

Succulent bowls are easy to create with a few design guidelines...

Succulent Pots

Choose the pot first, in a color that matches your patio or deck furniture or front door color. Then select plants that go with it.

Or, you can choose the plants first and then select a pot that complements them. If you already have a container you can take a picture to one of our SummerWinds Nursery locations and ask for help to choose the best plants.

Since succulents dislike standing water, try to use a dish, saucer or other container with a drainage hole. If your pot doesn't have one, drill one in it or put a layer of small rocks or pea gravel on the bottom. This will help drain water away from the roots.



Thriller, Filler, Spiller

What's the deal with this little rhyme? It's actually a “formula” that's commonly used in the world of container arrangements—and it's probably one of the most widely suggested guidelines for designing an arrangement.

It's so simple, and it results in great arrangements every time.

A **“thriller”** succulent is one that's large, tall, spikey, or dramatically different from the other succulents in the arrangement. It should stand out as the first thing people notice when they see the design.

“Filler” succulents, on the other hand, make up the bulk of the arrangement. “Filler” doesn’t mean boring or dull, though! Choose “filler” succulents that complement your “thriller” while still providing some visual interest, whether it’s their color or texture. You can even use multiple succulent varieties!



“Spiller” succulents hang over the edge of the pot. These are typically trailing succulents like “String of Pearls”, “String of Bananas” or “String of Hearts”. These can also be longer succulents like Sedum “Burrito” that will eventually trail as they grow more.

How to Plant Succulents

Add E.B. Stone Cactus and Succulent Mix to the container. Cover the bottom of the container with enough succulent-mix potting soil so that when the plants are placed, the soil line on their stems will remain about 1/2 inch below the rim of the container. This will make it easier to water the pot without overflowing the sides of the container.

Test-Fit the Plants

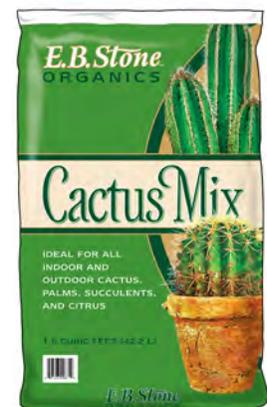
Place your plants, still in their nursery pots, into the container to get a general idea of the container design. Move the plants around until you are satisfied with the arrangement. One classic arrangement includes a central “thriller” specimen and a group of “filler” plants as well as “spillers” that flow over the edges of the container. But this arrangement is entirely up to you. Wonderful container gardens often result from breaking traditional design rules.

Plant the Container

Once you are happy with the arrangement, remove the plants from the container, take them out of their nursery pots, and place them back into the container, one-by-one. The soil in the nursery pots may be fairly coarse and loose, so be careful when removing the plants. Hold the plant gently at the top with the stem between two fingers. Turn the pot over on its side and gently tap the bottom of the pot and ease the plant out. (If you are handling a spiny succulent, make sure to wear gloves).

Once all plants are placed in the container, creating the design you want, gently pack additional potting soil around each plant. As you do this, make sure to keep the plants at the same level they were growing at in their nursery pots—don’t bury them deeper than they were already growing.

Confirm that you have filled in all the holes and spaces between the plants and also between the plants and the sides of the container. If you leave air gaps, the roots may dry out, which can be lethal to your plants.



Add the Finishing Touches

Gently remove any soil that is covering the leaves and stems of the plants. You can do this with a soft-bristled brush, or even by gently blowing on the plants.

To give your container a finished look, cover the surface of the potting soil with a topdressing of coarse material, such as fine gravel, pebbles, sea glass, or marbles. The topdressing material can be brightly colored or neutral, depending on the look you want to achieve.



Tips for Caring for a Succulent Container Garden

During spring and summer—the growing season for most succulents—keep the soil moist but not wet. It's better to let the soil get a little dry between watering than it is to over-water. During the winter, when succulent plants are normally dormant, water much less frequently, keeping the soil on the dry side but not letting it dry out completely.

Fertilization should be fairly minimal with succulent plants, and it may not be needed at all. This depends largely on the type of plants you are growing—research each species to learn its needs. If feeding is called for, do it only during the active growing season, using a diluted liquid fertilizer designed for succulents.



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Resources:

Debra Lee Baldwin (2019), Succulents and Sunshine LLC., **Tips for Arranging Succulents in Containers and Landscapes.** <https://www.succulentsandsunshine.com/tips-for-arranging-succulents-in-containers-and-landscapes/>

Kerry Michaels (Updated 07/20/19), **How to Make an Easy Succulent Container Garden.** <https://www.thespruce.com/make-a-succulent-plant-container-garden-848006>