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SUCCULENTS FOR THE COASTAL GARDEN

Succulents are unique plants that store water in their leaves, stems and roots. Most cacti are succulents, but not all succulents are cacti. Some succulents are more cold tolerant than others and their roots in some cases can survive below freezing temperature. The hardier succulents will freeze back, and then come back up when the weather gets warmer. However, many succulents completely freeze and do not come back.

The ones that survive year 'round will spread. It is refreshing to see vivid shades of green abounding in a yard in the middle of the summer when everything else has pretty much dried up due to the high heat and strong sun. Succulents are easy care plants that require low watering regimens and can thrive with very little care.

Kalanchoes are a genus of succulents. One of the most popular types of Kalanchoes is [*Kalanchoe blossfeldiana*](https://webmail.indstate.edu/owa/redir.aspx?C=19faf8272c9a4d10ad7ddb085bb794dc&URL=http%3a%2f%2fen.wikipedia.org%2fwiki%2fKalanchoe_blossfeldiana). Quite often, you will see these featured for sale in grocery stores and garden centers. But when winter comes, kalanchoes can often be the first plant to go when we experience a deep freeze.

After a few seasons of losing a lot of succulents, some gardeners begin to think about plant selection that includes hardiness in cold weather. Succulents are ideal additions to your landscape and are very forgiving if you forget to water them on time. Their tough leaves are also disease and pest resistant. But they must be taken in when there is a freeze or you will probably lose them. Because of this, many gardeners prefer to plant succulents in pots which they place in their yards or patios.

Gardeners have discovered a little known fact: the importance of the “hardiness description” on the container of the plant you purchase. Hardiness means cold-tolerant and will gives a temperature below which the plant will freeze. These descriptions  give you good advice about what kind of plant or succulent to buy. There are some very lovely cacti that are very cold tolerant, for example. If you look at the labels, you can choose succulents that will make it through a freeze.

If you know your plant can survive at a temperature of way below freezing, you can face the weatherman's winter warnings with confidence. There is nothing to worry about. On the other hand, if you want to plant succulents that are cold sensitive, then your only alternative is to bring the plants inside until it warms up outside. For this reason, container planting is a good idea for many succulents. It is possible to cover them up with some bed sheets in the event of a cold snap freeze, but if the freeze lasts very many days, you are likely to lose your succulents.

If you wonder what type of succulents you can plant where you live, take a look at the yards in your town. You’ll see flashes of green succulents thriving in a yard and you can be pretty sure that they have a type of succulent that will do well in your yard as well. People who are successfully raising succulents, many times have extras to give away.

This is because succulents make baby plants, called "pups," which you place on top of moist soil. The hair-like roots should not be buried deeply. Instead, they merely need to be in contact with the soil, and left alone. You will be surprised how quickly they start growing.

If you are going to buy succulents, save your money by not buying big pots of them. Instead, purchase a smaller succulent, give it room to spread out, and before you know it, it will be full size. Your succulent garden will expand and expand, creating a lush green effect in your garden, even during droughts.

Consider creating a patch of all the same kind of succulents to create a focal point in your landscape. Rededicate part of your yard to succulents. First of all, this reduces mowing and pollution caused by lawn mowers. Secondly, the visual impact is astounding. Succulents provide an architectural feel and texture to your landscape.

Now is the time to go to the garden center or, with permission, your neighbor's yard and get some succulents! Be sure to read the labels and select plants that tolerate freezing. This could be a fun family activity and educational for both you and your children.