

## **Setting the Record Straight on Succulents.**

It is a common misconception that all succulents need full sun and can take the scorching heat of our interior valleys. It is true that cacti and other desert plants like agaves, yuccas and dasylirions can take that exposure in stride. But other 'softer' leaf succulents aren't actually desert plants. Aeoniums, aloes, dudleyas, echeverias and others are from coastal or cooler mountain regions of Africa and islands like the Canary Islands and Madagascar. No wonder they scorch and shrink when we plant them in full hot sun in the valley! If you are on the coast or in a fog belt like Berkeley or Richmond, they will be happy in any exposure (except deep shade). But inland, find places where they can take advantage of some partial shade from a boulder or wall or a taller plant. With just a little sun protection they will thrive in even the hottest climates.

Another misconception is that succulents don't need any water. While you do want to be fairly stingy with the frequency of watering, they do need water. Without it, they will use up all the reserves they store in their succulent stems and leaves and shrivel up. What they cannot tolerate is water that doesn't drain out of the soil quickly. Succulents want a good drink to replenish their water storage capacity and then want the water to drain away from their roots. That is why we recommend mixing the bagged *Cactus Mix* together with *Volcanic Pumice* (60%/40% respectively) when planting in pots.

When planting succulents in the ground, mound up the same soil mixture 12" or more and add a gravel mulch on top to keep their roots from staying too wet during our long winter rainy season. (*Tip: plant rosette forming succulents on a tilt or slope so water doesn't 'collect' in the center of the rosette and cause rot.*)

Succulents can add a whole new dimension to your garden and planted with the above considerations will last for many years. We have many beautiful succulents to pick from in the nursery. If you are unsure of your selection or site issues, don't hesitate to ask our qualified Nursery Professionals for help!

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