

Succulents in Winter

It is November now, and if you live east of the Caldecott Tunnel, you might need to take steps to protect your tender varieties of succulents from cold and frost damage. Here is what you can do.

First cut back on the frequency of your waterings. It is always best to err on the side of too little rather than too much (frequent) water, even during the growing season. During the winter, most succulents are in a dormant state (there are a few exceptions like Aeoniums) and water should be even less frequent. Many succulents can handle borderline low temperatures if they aren't overly wet. It is the combination of staying too wet because of our long rainy season *combined* with the cold temperatures that can be fatal.

Secondly, pull succulents in containers up close to the house under the eaves, but where they can still get sun. The wall of your house provides reflective and radiant warmth and the eaves will keep a lot of the rain off of your plants. Make sure you check them occasionally through the winter months. If they are starting to look sunken or shriveled, it is time to water.

Thirdly, cover succulents that are too large to move or are planted in the ground. It is best to 'tent' them with frost cloth or clear plastic and keep the material from touching the plant. Get creative! Use those stakes and tomato cages from the vegetable garden for your tent structure. If you are using clear plastic sheeting make sure you cut a door flap that you can open if the weather turns balmy in February. It is rare that a plant in the ground would need winter watering, but be observant.

With a little preparation, you and your succulents can have a Happy Holiday Season!