



Among stars at the May 6-7 [Houston Cactus & Succulent Society Spring Sale](#),

above l to r, Echeveria Raindrop, Lithops and Cactus Shack Hybrid Haworthia. Below: Lithops and Friends (All photos by Richard Stamper)

CACTI & SUCCULENTS

**NOT ALL ARE CREATED EQUAL — DOING
HOMEWORK PAYS OFF IN LONG RUN**

By Houston Cactus & Succulent Society

hcsstex.org

It will seem that most succulent plants come from full-sun locations. True in many cases, but other factors, like putting plants on a west side, can be a death sentence.

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Most nurseries have precise conditions for growing their crops. Full sun is usually not one of these. Some level of shade covers plants; accurate watering keeps nursery stock growing in a specially prepared soil

Then we introduce them to a whole new set of conditions. One result of too much light too soon is that the soil in the container heats up to the point where the roots cook.

Eventually we can introduce plants to higher levels of light. Indeed, many Cacti, Agaves, etc. will get along well in full sun. The best practice is to gradually introduce plants into higher light levels. Close observation is necessary to determine what level of light will be needed. If growing indoors, a southern window with bright light is best.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

What is a good standard soil mix to grow C&S?

- 1/3 Easy GRO Premium potting soil or equivalent
- 1/3 large perlite or pumice
- 1/3 coarse sand or fine gravel (like aquarium gravel)

What are the watering considerations?

Each plant has its own water requirements; find out what these are. Is the plant water-sensitive, is it a spring or fall grower, will it be grown in the house or outside in the elements, or in a greenhouse?

General Rules

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Water thoroughly and allow to dry out completely before watering again. During warmer months (Mar. to Oct.) water every 7 - 10 days.

In cooler months (Nov. to Feb.) water carefully every 3 - 4 weeks. However, some cactus should be kept completely dry during this dormancy period.

When is it too hot or cold for Cacti & Succulents?

Although many of these plants are native to areas that may freeze, they are often not as cold-proof when we grow them. Many succulents are found in tropical areas and cannot tolerate even a hard freeze overnight. So, the safe bet is . . .

- Start protecting your plants if temperatures are forecast to get below 40 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Conversely, many succulent plants occur in temperate regions where it doesn't get really hot as it does here.
- With these plants shade and careful watering can help them through the hot months. Close observation is necessary to determine what level of shade and water will be needed.
- Water when the soil is dry, as often as weekly during the growing season. Plants in clay pots dry out faster than those in plastic or ceramic pots. Test with your finger or a moisture meter. Starting in the fall, begin to water every 3-4 weeks. In cooler months, some cacti should be kept completely dry during their dormancy period. Learn the individual needs for each of your plants.

What kind of pots should I use?

- Clay - Clay dries out faster than plastic or ceramic pots. Use shallow azalea pots, or bulb pots.



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- Plastic - Black, dark green, or gray if possible.
- White and bright colors have a tendency to degrade and break while being handled.
- Ceramic - Expensive but dresses up your collection. Avoid highly decorated pots.

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