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Left: Aloe vera is a succulent that can be grown indoors as a house plant or in temperate zones as an outdoor perennial. Center: Jade plant is an easy-to-grow succulent that stores water in its leaves, stems and roots. Right: Avoid placing zebra plants in direct sunlight, as it can scorch the leaves.

Discover the easiest *succulents* to grow indoors

Question: I was an avid gardener for decades, but now due to physical limitations, I am not able to get outside much. So to keep my green thumb happy, I would like to grow succulents indoors and would appreciate any helpful suggestions.



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Master Gardener

Answer: In the world of indoor gardening, succulents have become the darlings of plant enthusiasts. Their unique shapes, sizes and vibrant colors make them a perfect choice for those seeking to bring a touch of nature into their homes.

Here is a list of the easiest succulents to grow indoors, guaranteed to brighten up your space with minimal effort:

1. Aloe vera (*Aloe barbadensis*) is an extremely popular succulent and prefers bright, indirect light. A south-facing windowsill is perfect for growing aloe. Aloe vera only needs watering every two to three weeks, making it ideal for those prone to forgetting to water their plants. One reason that aloe vera is well-known is

because the gel from the leaves is often used to treat minor burns and skin irritations. Aloe is sensitive to cold temperatures and needs a room temperature above 50 degrees.

2. Jade plant (*Crassula ovata*), sometimes known as the Money Plant or Friendship Tree, is a hardy succulent that prefers bright light but can withstand low-light conditions. Its thick, fleshy leaves store water, allowing it to survive extended periods without watering. When grown indoors, this branched succulent usually grows to be 2-3 feet tall, although it takes a long time to reach this size since they only grow about 2 inches each year. As it matures, it takes on the appearance of a miniature tree. Jade plants can live in excess of 50 years with proper care.



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Haworthias are popular houseplants capable of being grown successfully indoors in all areas of the world

3. Haworthias (*Haworthia* spp.) are small succulents with intriguing geometric patterns on their fleshy leaves which are arranged in a rosette pattern. There are about 160 species from which to choose. These plants prefer bright, indirect light, but can tolerate low-light

conditions, making them a good choice for indoor settings. These low-growing plants are perfect for desks, shelves or terrariums. Haworthias can survive with infrequent watering, making them perfect for busy plant owners. They need to be watered when the soil is

completely dried out and their leaves start to curl.

4. Snake plants (*Sansevieria trifasciata*), also known as Mother-in-Law's Tongue, are known for their long, sword-shaped leaves that resemble a snake's skin. Their variegated patterns of deep green and yellow create a mesmerizing display of low-maintenance beauty. Snake plants tolerate a wide range of lighting conditions. They can thrive in both bright, indirect light and low-light environments. Allow the soil to dry out between watering. It is better to underwater than to overwater snake plants.

5. Zebra Plant (*Haworthia fasciata*) is a striking succulent with white stripes that resemble zebra patterns on its dark, green leaves. This plant prefers bright, indirect light. Avoid placing them in direct sunlight, as it can scorch the leaves. Keep the soil consistently moist, but not waterlogged. Allow the top inch of soil to dry out slightly before watering again.

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Snake plant is a long-lived, unfussy, succulent houseplant also known as mother-in-law's tongue.

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Remember, while succulents are generally low-maintenance, they still require some care. Ensure they are planted in well-draining soil to prevent root-rot. A suitable soil mix consists of three primary components: inorganic material (such as perlite) for drainage, organic matter (like peat moss or coconut coir) for moisture retention and sand for added porosity.

This blend guarantees an optimal balance of moisture and aeration, allowing succulent roots to thrive.

Indoor succulents will do best where they can receive bright, indirect sunlight for at least six

hours a day. If natural light is limited, use artificial grow lights specifically designed for plants, placing them about 6-12 inches above the succulents. Remember to rotate your plants occasionally to ensure even exposure to light and prevent them from leaning towards a single direction.

Succulents have relatively low nutritional needs, and excessive fertilization can harm their growth. Use a balanced, water-soluble fertilizer specifically formulated for succulents, diluted to half strength, and apply it sparingly during the growing season (usually spring and summer). Fertilize your succulents about once every two to four weeks.

Just a word of caution if you have indoor pets – most succulents are toxic to animals.

With patience, diligence and some green-thumb skills, you'll soon be rewarded with a stunning collection of thriving indoor succulents, beautifying your living space and bringing joy to your gardening endeavors.

Do you have a gardening or insect question?

Contact the Douglas County Master Gardeners at douglasmg@oregonstate.edu, 541-672-4461 or 1134 SE Douglas Ave., Roseburg. Master Gardeners are trained volunteers who help the OSU Extension Service serve the people of Douglas County.