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Upright sedums have dense, domed flowers and succulent leaves on 1-2 foot stems.

# Sedums are a hard-to-kill flower

**Question:** What kind of garden plant is a sedum and how, or is it, related to succulents?

**Answer:** Sedum, also known as stonecrop, is a large genus of flowering plants in the Crassulaceae family containing some 600 species. Found primarily in the Northern Hemisphere, they are hardy, drought-tolerant perennials with succulent characteristics of water storing leaves and stems.

Gardeners use the word succulent to describe a plant characteristic that allows the plant to adapt to dry conditions and drought. Some parts of the leaves, roots or stems are thickened and fleshy with the ability to retain water in arid climates or soil conditions.

Gardeners generally consider sedums to be of three types: upright, creeping or trailing.

Few plants are more forgiving of sun and bad soil than sedum plants; they need very little attention or care. They are ideal for that part of your yard that gets too much sun or too little water to grow anything else.

Many gardeners joke that only stones need less care and live longer, thus their common name of stonecrop. All sedums prefer a sunny spot in your garden and well-drained



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soil with a neutral to slightly alkaline pH. Space sedums 6-12 inches apart when planting, depending on the variety and how quickly you want to fill in an area

Upright sedums have dense, domed flowers and succulent leaves on one-to-two foot stems. Although not universally accepted, some upright Sedums are now considered part of the Hylotelephium genus, but still a part of the Crassulaceae family. Taller sedums work wonderfully in both fresh and dried flower arrangements, but require a bit of maintenance either in the late fall or early spring to cut back their stems.

Popular creeping sedums produce clusters of star-shaped flowers and are well suited for ground cover, rock walls or container planting. Widely used is the “Coral Carpet” (Sedum album), which forms a low carpet of small, rounded green leaves that are clustered together like little beads, taking on rich tones in summer and



**Coral Carpet (Sedum album), which forms a low carpet of small, rounded green leaves that are clustered together like little beads, taking on rich tones in summer and winter.**

winter. White star flowers appear in summer.

Another attractive choice for edging or rock gardens with a low, spreading carpet of elegant, round, green leaves rimmed in reddish-bronze in autumn and bright yellow flowers in the summer is the Coral Reef Stonecrop also called Chinese Sedum (Sedum Tetactinum).

Trailing sedums add interest draping over the edges of containers or hanging baskets. A

well-liked choice is the Burro’s Tail (Sedum morganianum) with fleshy blue-green leaves and bright pink to red flowers in the summer.

Sedums will thrive in conditions that are less hospitable for other plants. Their nectar-rich flower heads are loved by bees and other pollinators and once established, are quite disease resistant. Although these ground covers might look beleaguered in the fall as they go dormant, they will

once again brighten your garden with color and beauty in late spring.

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*Do you have a gardening or insect question? Contact the Douglas County Master Gardeners at [douglasmg@oregonstate.edu](mailto:douglasmg@oregonstate.edu) or 541-672-4461 or visit 1134 SE Douglas Ave., Roseburg. Douglas County Master Gardeners are trained volunteers who help the OSU Extension Service serve the people of Douglas County.*