Hardy Succulents and Companion Plants

What is a hardy succulent in the Willamette Valley?

1. They will grow in zones ranging from 7b (5°F to 10°F), 8a (10°F to 15°F) and 8b (15°F to 20°F) in the Willamette Valley. Many can grow in zone 4b.
2. Can the plant survive in our very wet and cold winters, and early spring conditions?
3. Soil types: All of these can be used; the clay must be amended to improve drainage.
   a. Clay, add compost, or make berms or raised beds with suitable soil.
   b. Sandy loam, drains fast and provides lots of nutrients for succulents and their companion plants

   Just remember, it needs to be fast draining or our winter/spring rains will cause the plant to rot. It also helps to have a nice thick layer of grit/gravel/pumice under the plant leaves to keep them up off the wet soil.

4. Containers: use high quality potting mixes and add one part (or more) of pumice to one part potting mix. See sources for pumice on page 3. Pumice is the best to use. Also works very well for top dressing.

Sempervivum: growing zone 4a, is one of the toughest of the hardy succulents. They range in size from ¼” across and up to 12” across a single rosette. They come in many textures and colors. There are thousands to choose from.

1. Sempervivum: rosettes producing offsets from stolons. Comes in many forms, from smooth leaves, velvety texture, arachnoideum (webbing), and everything in between. Blooms are star shaped and come in colors of red, pink, cream and white.
2. S. globiferum: produces offsets with with from tiny/frail stolons that break away from the parent, and roll away from the parent. Thus the nickname of Roller. Blooms are campanulate and range in color from yellow to cream, almost white.
3. S. heuffelii: produces new rosettes from the same crown as the parent rosette. Blooms are campanulate and are yellow to cream and almost white in color.

Sedum: growing zones vary from zone 4 and up, depending on the variety. Easily found Sedum: album, dasyphyllum, divergens, spathulifolium, kimnachii, laxum, oreganum, spathulifolium and much more. There are too many to list, have fun searching for treasure.

Phedimus, Petrosedum, Rhodiola and Hylotelephium. Many were at one time classified as Sedum.
Delosperma: D. cooperii is tough and blooms from spring until killing frost, vigorous grower. D. ‘Blut’ is very similar, but is not as aggressive. D. ‘Jewel of Desert Grenade’ grows slowly and also blooms until frost. D. davyi is a favorite for it’s wonderful dark leaf color as a backdrop to sweet white blooms in the spring, a repeat bloomer if happy. Many great new varieties coming to market this year.

Orostachys and Rosularia are two other succulents that do very well in our growing conditions, and have the same requirements as sempervivum.

More hardy type succulents: Phemeranthus calcynius, Crassula setulosa, Bergeranthus jamesii, Lewisia ‘Elise’, Montiopsis umbellata, Prometheum aizoon, P. chrysanthum, P. pilosum, Rhodiola pachyclados,

Some of the tender succulent types can survive our winters if given protection from the rain. Do not water them in the winter, leave them dry. The pumice will hold enough moisture to keep them healthy during the winter months.

Tender Succulents that I grow outside: Echeveria ‘Lady’s Choice’, ‘Topsy Turvy’, ‘Black Prince’, E. ‘Imbricata’ E. derenbergii, E. minima, Crassula ovata ‘Gollum’, Euphorbia clavarioides and Aloe aristata. These are kept on my covered deck, against the house and no water during the winter. There are probably many more that can survive our winters if kept dry.


Herbs: Thymus x citriodorus (Lemon Thyme), T. vulgaris (culinary Thyme), T. serpyllum ‘Elfin’, T. praecox ‘Coccineus Group’ (Red Creeping Thyme), T. praecox subsp. polytrichus (Wooly

**Protecting your new plants:**

- Ant traps
- Bird netting (for birds, squirrels, deer, etc.) Child/animal/bird proof slug bait (fall, end of winter and several times in the spring)
- Rubber snakes / Walmart (you need to move them around every few days)

*Sarracenia* ‘Fat Chance’. This is not drought tolerant and wants a peat moss type growing medium. It does like sun. I use a milk jug with the top cut off, fill with peat moss and fill with water. Plant your sarracenia. I dig a hole in the bed and place the container in the hole. Place lots of grit/pumice as top dressing.

**Plant sources in Oregon:**

- Dancing Oaks Nursery [https://dancingoaks.com/](https://dancingoaks.com/)
- Perennial Obsessions [https://perennialobsessions.com/](https://perennialobsessions.com/)
- SMG Succulents [https://www.smgsucculents.com](https://www.smgsucculents.com)

**Soil and amendment sources:**

- Highway Fuel Company, Salem, OR  503-363-6444, Pumice by the bucket, or you can buy in bulk. They have a full line of gardening products. Check out their website. [http://highwayfuel.com/](http://highwayfuel.com/#)
- GroundUpSoil, Scio, OR  503-910-0221 Pumice by the bucket, or you can buy in bulk. They have a full line of gardening products. Check out their website. [https://groundupsoil.com/](https://groundupsoil.com/)