LA COUNTY LIBRARY

Activity Idea

GROWING SUCCULENTS

Recommended for Ages 7+

You will need the following materials:

- Small container, such as an empty yogurt cup
- Soil
- Spray bottle filled with water

What are succulents?

Succulents are plants that store water in their leaves and stems, enabling them to thrive in dry climates as they can survive on the water that they store when it rains. Even if you are not familiar with the classification "succulent", chances are you have seen them all over! One of the most well-known types of succulents is a cactus. Many other kinds are characterized by their thick leaves.

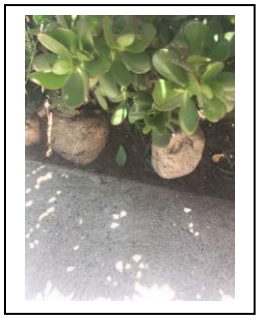
How propagation works

It is possible to regenerate, or propagate, a succulent in several different ways. The easiest way is by allowing the leaves that have broken off or have been cut from the main plant to grow their own roots. This happens with soil, water, and sun! When placed on the top layer of moist soil, eventually, the cuttings will develop roots. Once the roots are strong enough, they can be re-potted and will grow into a healthy plant.

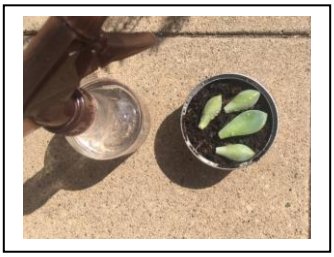
Instructions

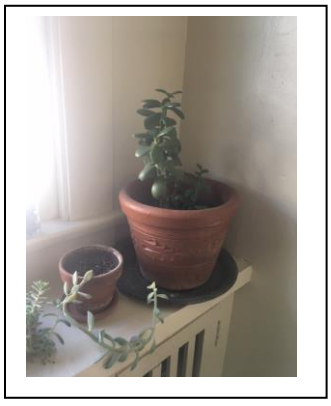
1. Take a walk
   - Do you have a yard with succulents growing? Maybe you have noticed succulent plants in a neighbor or friend's yard. Does your grandmother have indoor succulents growing in her apartment? Succulents often lose their leaves very easily.
   - Take a walk in your neighborhood and observe the different succulent plants. Chances are you will see stems or leaves that have broken off from the main plant.

- Get permission from the property tenant (neighbor, parent, or friend) to gather the leaves or stems that have fallen to the ground.
- Please note while cacti are part of the succulent family, do not attempt to propagate a cactus on your own. Special tools are required as their spines can cause painful injuries.



2. Pot your leaves and stems
   - The leaves are easiest and fastest to propagate. Stems develop roots over a longer period of time.
   - Take your container and fill it with soil. If you or a friend have a yard, get permission to fill your cup with soil from their yard.
   - With your spray bottle full of water, moisten the top layer of soil. It is important that it does not get too wet, so just spray a little bit.
   - Carefully place the leaves on the top layer, then give them another spray of water.
   - Place the container in a sunny window or yard, and spray with water every other day.
   - Roots should begin to develop within 1 – 2 weeks.



3. Repot
   - Once roots have developed and the succulent leaf has begun to grow its own plant, each of the cuttings can be re-potted into their own container.

Photos by G. Poole