

# Tom's Garden

## Blog January 2022

### A Guide to Growing Echeveria

Echeveria are among the most popular succulents. Ideal for beginners, a wide range of contrasting colors and forms can be used to create a trouble-free windowsill collection. Their rosettes can be from 2 to 6 inches wide on short stems with thick stocky leaves.



There are over 150 species to choose from for color, shape and size.

Echeveria are native to Mexico, Central America and South America. Most will produce bell-shaped flowers on a long stem each spring or summer without any special treatment.

Handle echeveria with care because the leaves easily break off. One good thing; they are low maintenance and easily survive periods of neglect.

Provide echeveria with bright light when growing indoors.

Put this plant in a south or west facing window. When not getting enough light, the rosette will stretch out of form. A desk or table lamp will help with low-light conditions. Succulents grow toward a light source. Turn the plant once a week to keep an even growth. If your plant begins to stretch, just continue growing it and start fresh in spring by cutting the top off and rooting it as a new rosette. Break off some leaves and start them as new plants. The leaves easily grow roots. Let the leaf callous over for a few days and put the end in loose potting soil. Spray occasionally with a water mist.

You can grow echeverias outdoors in summer. Avoid sudden changes in light exposure and protect them from the hot afternoon sun. The leaves will get sunburned and sometimes curl.



Generally, echeverias should get 6 hours of bright light during winter indoors and 8 to 12 hours in spring and summer outside.

This will keep the rosette compact and show good leaf color.

The best practice for watering is to give a deep regular watering and let the soil dry out completely between waterings. I am assuming it is planted in a well-draining cactus/succulent soil mix. Most problems are caused by overwatering and root rot. Always err on the dry side. Don't worry, neglect is good for these plants!

### **Fertilization**

Apply a half-strength liquid fertilizer once a month from spring to late summer.

Echeverias are not hardy and can't survive cold temperatures. They like temps between 65 and 80 degrees and don't like temps below 50. Bring them indoors in winter. In spring, gradually move them outdoors, exposing them more each day.



## **How to care for Amaryllis**

Although amaryllis can be purchased at any stage of development, for a lot of people the real fun is growing their own plant from a bulb.

Most amaryllis bulbs are sold already potted with complete growing instructions. Once watering is started, you can expect lily-like blooms of red, pink, white, orange or multi-color in 4 to 6 weeks. Some bulbs are sold already sprouted. After all the flowering is done, the leaves will appear. Some will sprout 2 or 3 sets of flower stalks. Grow the amaryllis as a foliage plant. You can plant it outside in the flower bed in spring and let it grow all summer. (That's what I do). Feed it just as would with any other plant and the bulb will store energy for the up-coming new season.

In September, Dig it up, remove any soil, and cut off the foliage (it will still be green). Trim the roots and store the bulb in a cool dark place for about a month.

Pot the bulb up in regular potting soil, keeping about a third of the bulb exposed. Place in a bright window, water well and in a few weeks you will see a sprout coming up. Be patient! It will bloom again.

## **New Year Traditions**

### **Make Some Noise**

\*In ancient Thailand, guns were fired to frighten off demons.

\*In China, firecrackers routed the forces of darkness.

\*In the early American colonies, the sounds of pistol shots rang through the air.

\*Today, Italians let their church bells peal, the Swiss beat drums, and North Americans sound sirens, party horns and set off fireworks to bid the old year farewell.

## **Eat Something Special**

- \*Pork and sauerkraut are traditional in my family.
- \*In the southern United States, black-eyed peas and pork foretell good fortune.
- \*In Dutch homes, fritters called *olie bollen* are served.
- \*The Irish enjoy pastries called bannocks.
- \*Apples dipped in honey are a Rosh Hashanah tradition.

## **Drink a Beverage**

- \*The pop of a champagne cork brings the arrival of the New Year around the world.
- \*"Wassail," the Gaelic term for "good health," is served in England.
- \*In Holland, toasts are made with hot spiced wine.

## **Give a Gift**

- \*New Year's Day was once the time to swap presents.
- \*Gifts of gilded nuts or coins marked the start of the New Year in Rome.
- \*Eggs, the symbol of fertility, were exchanged by the Persians.
- \*Early Egyptians traded earthenware flasks.
- \*In Scotland, coal, shortbread and silverware were traditionally exchanged for good luck.

*Credit: The Old Farmer's Almanac*

**I know it's only January** and too early to plant anything outside. It is not, however, too early to start planning a native Ohio garden for the coming season.

(continued) Native Ohio plants provide a vital source of food and shelter for our pollinators and wildlife. Native plants feed the caterpillars that the birds then feed to their young fledglings. Native plants also grow well in our soil and climactic conditions, usually without any special care. The best location for a native garden is a sunny spot anywhere in your landscape. You can designate an area of your yard or even use containers on a deck or patio. Grouping a variety of plants together helps pollinators find and feed on desirable flowers while using less energy searching for plants. Try to use a mixture of colors and textures that makes the garden attractive to more and different pollinators. It also makes your garden more attractive for you to enjoy. Each type of pollinator is attracted to different colors. Bees like purple, blue, yellow and white. Butterflies enjoy red, yellow, orange, pink and purple. Hummingbirds like many bright colors, especially red. Birds like many of these same colors and will feed caterpillars to their young, even if they are strict seed eaters. So you see it is a whole cycle of everything coming together in one plot. Try to have something blooming during the entire season. Different species of bees, butterflies and other pollinators are active at different times during the season. Plant a variety of flowers that bloom at different times so there are blooms from early spring to late fall. Many of our native Ohio plants will accomplish this.

This will also help to make your garden look great for a long period of time.

Here are just a few plants for starters.

Golden rod, white and purple asters, butterfly weed, purple star thistle (not Canadian thistle!), catmint (not catnip!), spiderwort, anise hyssop, blazing star liatris, lupine, yarrow and Joe Pye weed.

Try to keep local nurseries in mind when purchasing plants and support your local growers.

Start planning now and make a list of plants that will fit into your space and scheme.

for more information go to:

[ohioline.osu.edu](http://ohioline.osu.edu) “Attracting pollinators to the garden.” Fact Sheet ENT-47