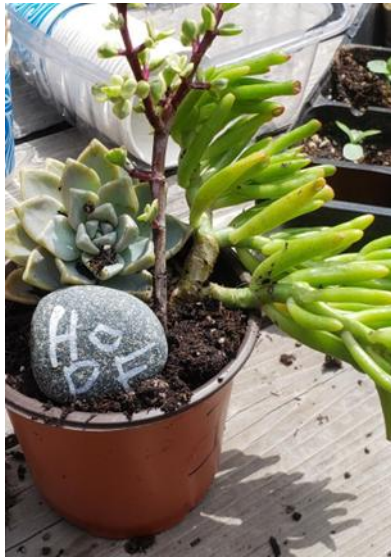


Activity: Planting Goal: Social/Emotional: Populations: Children/Youth

## TH Activity Plan – Succulent Potting

Text by Karen Haney, M.A., HTR

Photo by K. Haney



**ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION:** Participants will pot up succulents into an individual container or pot with an inspirational message to create a “mini garden”.

### THERAPEUTIC GOALS:

**Cognitive/Intellectual:** Learn about adventitious roots, succulent propagation, soil types, & basic garden design strategies; practice writing words & consider financial aspects of potted plant designs

**Physical:** Strengthen fine motor skills

**Psychological/Emotional:** Discuss the use of metaphors related to roots; identify inspiring quotes or words; take care of a plant

**Sensory:** Work with various succulent plant textures

**Social:** Share ideas & creations with others; or give as a gift

### STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS:

1. **Pre-Session Preparation:** Propagate or purchase a variety of rooted succulent cuttings/pieces. Facilitator can gather inspiring quotes related to roots or nature.
2. Facilitator begins the session by introducing the concepts of inspirational garden designs & themes, adventitious roots & the method of propagating succulents from stem cuttings.
3. Participants are encouraged to feel the well-draining potting soil & the textures of the various succulent leaves & stems.
4. Participants select a container & fill it approximately 2/3 full with soil, depending on the density of the roots of the succulent cuttings.
5. Participants select their succulent cuttings & make a mini garden design of their choice.
6. Once the container is planted, participants can write an inspirational message on a stone and set it inside the “garden”.

**APPLICATIONS FOR POPULATIONS:** This activity was originally developed for youth in foster care settings and with refugee status who were experiencing significant life transitions. It can be used with many populations, including people who are practicing English as a second language. Planting activities can be done indoors or outdoors as appropriate.

Working with succulents provides an engaging medium that allows for opportunities to make independent choices related to design and plant selections. These are factors that can help provide a sense of agency and

### Materials

Wipes

Gloves as needed

Variety of rooted succulent pieces

Well-draining potting soil

Chopsticks or spoons for setting holes

Potting containers

Stones or blank garden signs

Paint pens or paint

Small brushes as needed

empowerment to people experiencing hardship or life transitions. Discussing adventitious roots provides opportunities for examining metaphors related to roots – ‘being uprooted’, ‘putting down roots’, ‘deep-rooted’ are some examples. In addition, the activity provides opportunities to consider plants in a vocational or financial management context. The facilitator can provide examples of succulent arrangements that are for sale at a local nursery or store and the participants can help determine their unit cost versus the profit they could make from selling the finished product.

**SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS: Facilitators are responsible for knowing poisonous and toxic plants and plant parts.**

Plants should not be toxic, thorny or sharp. [Some succulents are poisonous](#) (Euphorbia and Kalanchoe). Small children should be supervised to prevent any items (soil, stones) being put in mouths. Rocks and/or terra cotta pots may not be suitable in certain settings and can be substituted with blank garden markers and/or plastic containers as needed.

**NOTES OR OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:** Adventitious roots are roots that emerge from a point of the plant other than the root base, such as at the stems or leaves of a plant. Many succulents will develop adventitious roots when they are cut or divided from a mother plant. This activity uses succulents that have thick, fleshy leaves or stems that store water. Cactus plants have sharp spines and are not recommended for use. Some examples of succulents that can be easily propagated from small cuttings include echeveria, sedeveria, sedum or members of the stonecrop family, Portulacaria afra, and varieties of jade plant (*crassula ovata*). NOTE: I do not use Aloe for this activity due to size.

Propagating succulents can be a related activity done in previous sessions. Refer to THADs [African Violet Propagation](#), and [Starting Jade Plants in Soil](#). For phrases that can be written on containers, refer to THAD [Plant Puns on Pots](#).

**REFERENCES/ RESOURCES:**

Missouri Poison Center. (2021). [Are succulents poisonous to humans?](#) Missouri Poison Center.org.

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University of Florida. (2023). [Adventitious roots](#). Propeg.ifas.ufl.edu.

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Edits were made for THAD purposes in 2025.

TH Activity Plan form developed by Lesley Fleming, Susan Morgan and Kathy Brechner (2012), revised in 2025.