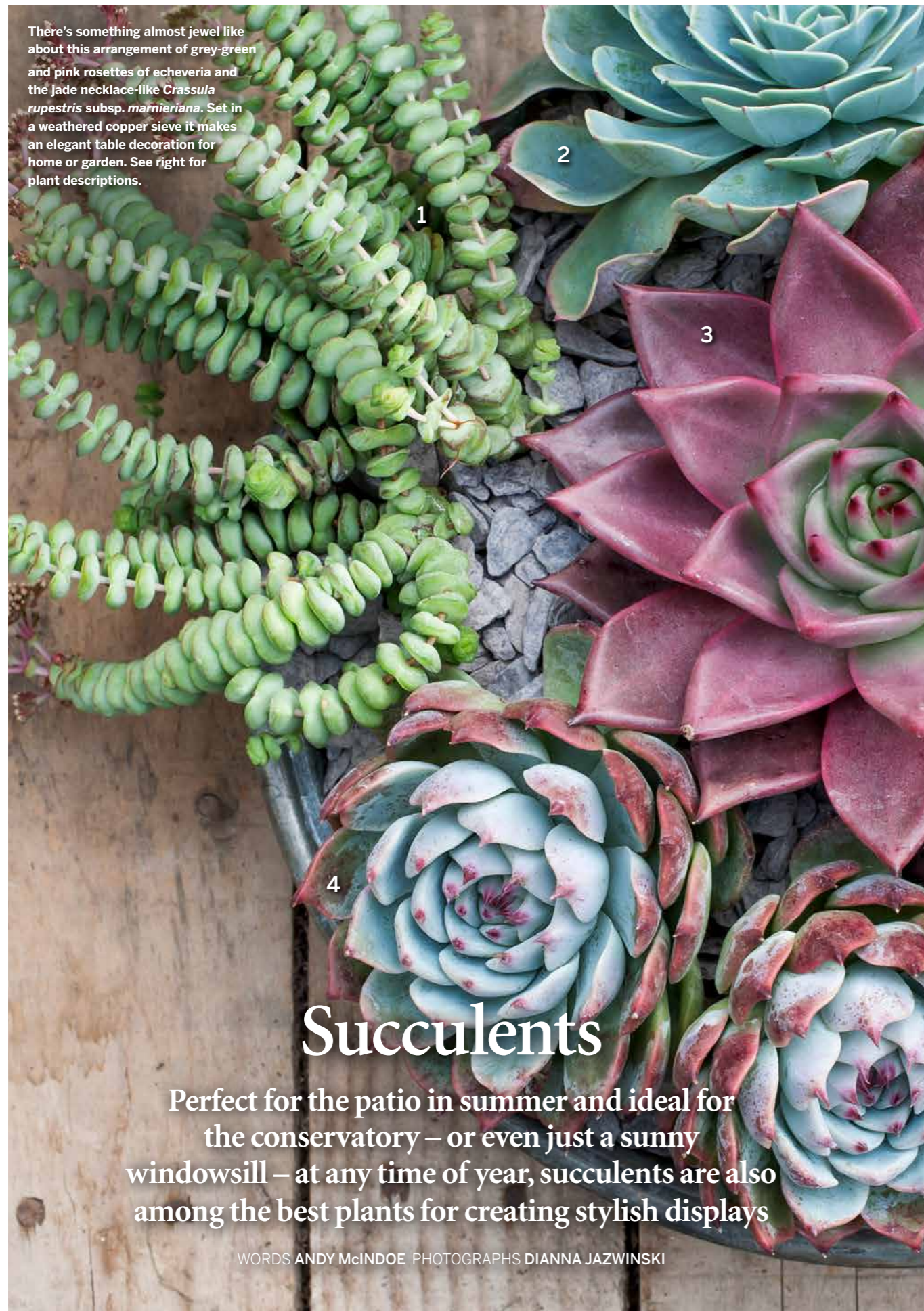


There's something almost jewel like about this arrangement of grey-green and pink rosettes of echeveria and the jade necklace-like *Crassula rupestris* subsp. *marnieriana*. Set in a weathered copper sieve it makes an elegant table decoration for home or garden. See right for plant descriptions.



# Succulents

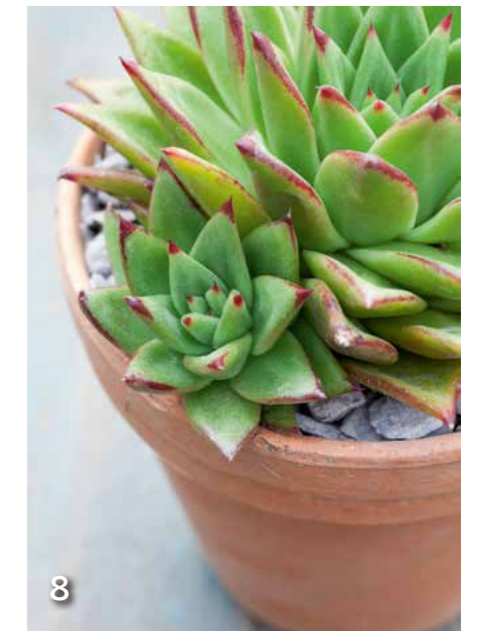
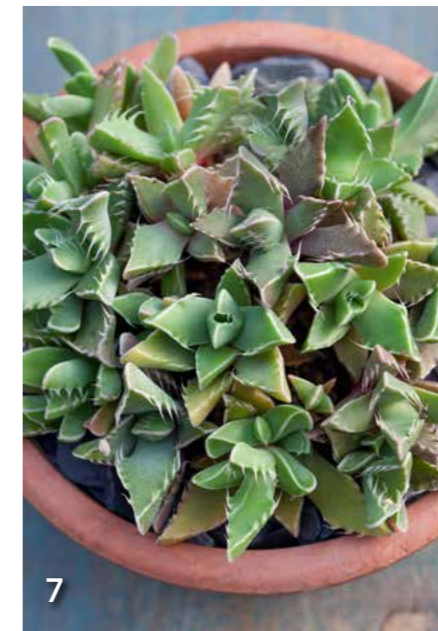
Perfect for the patio in summer and ideal for the conservatory – or even just a sunny windowsill – at any time of year, succulents are also among the best plants for creating stylish displays

WORDS ANDY McINDOE PHOTOGRAPHS DIANNA JAZWINSKI

Sculptural, symmetrical, abstract, exquisite, absurd: how one might describe the wonderful plants known as succulents. Found throughout the world in places where water is scarce, these are plants to cherish that thrive on neglect. The most colourful and interesting hail from North and South America and Africa, relishing sun, despising wet, tolerating cold but perishing in frost.

Many of the succulents featured here are natives of South Africa and South America. They can withstand some cold, but require winter protection in all but the mildest areas, needing a period of dormancy when they won't grow.

Good drainage is the secret of success when it comes to succulents, and growing in pots and containers is the best way to control the drainage. It also makes it easier to move them into a conservatory, greenhouse or covered porch during the coldest months. Small pots with large



**1 *Crassula rupestris* subsp. *marnieriana***  
Red-tipped leaves are tightly stacked along the stem. RHS H2, USDA 9b-11\*.

**2 *Echeveria* 'Imbricata'**  
Wide, tight rosettes of flat, grey-green leaves. RHS H2, USDA 9a-11.

**3 *Echeveria agavoides* 'Taurus'**  
Striking pink rosettes. Will tolerate some shade. RHS H2, USDA 9b-11.

**4 *Echeveria colorata***  
Beautiful red-tipped rosettes. Pink flowers in summer. AGM\*. RHS H2, USDA 9b-11.

**5 *Echeveria agavoides* 'Ebony'**  
One of the most sought-after echeveria. From Mexico. RHS H2, USDA 9b-11.

**6 *Aloe variegata***  
Easy to grow as a houseplant. Flowers in summer. AGM. RHS H2, USDA 9a-11.

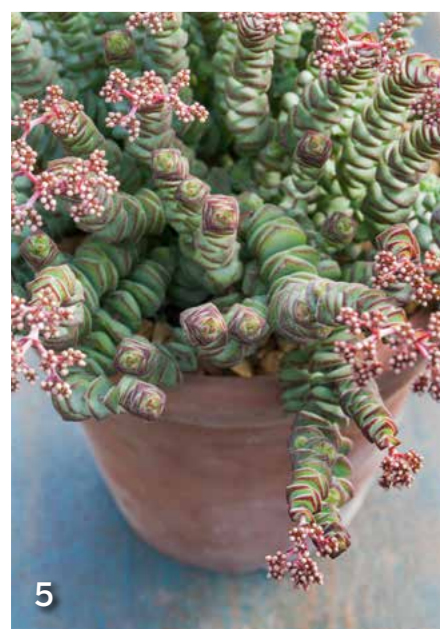
**7 *Faucaria felina***  
Pairs of chunky, curiously toothed, fleshy green leaves. RHS H2, USDA 9b-11.

**8 *Echeveria agavoides* 'Red Edge'**  
Grey-green leaves, edged in red form perfect rosettes. RHS H2, USDA 9a-11.

**9 *Fenestraria rhopalophylla***  
Known as baby toes, for obvious reasons. Daisy-like flowers in autumn. RHS H2, USDA 10a-11.

**10 *Haworthia reinwardtii***  
Dark-green leaves patterned with white warts. AGM. RHS H2, USDA 9b-11.

\*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society. If hardiness ratings given where available.



▷ drainage holes are ideal, as are shallow pans. If growing in large pots, partially fill these with hydroleca, using a growing medium only in the top third. Pot in a loam-based growing medium mixed with equal parts of sharp sand or horticultural grit. Water regularly but sparingly in the growing season; little when dormant.

Succulents lend themselves to creative, long-lasting arrangements that require low maintenance. Well-chosen containers that enhance the colour and appearance of the plants are essential to show them at their best. As they require shallow soil depth, many can be displayed on plates, or in containers without drainage holes ▷

**1 Echeveria 'Paris Palace'** New cultivar with rosettes sea green towards centre; deep purple at edge. RHS H2, USDA 9a-11.

**2 Lithops karasmontana** A living stone with clumps of buff-coloured leaves. AGM. RHS H2, USDA 9a-11.

**3 Crassula lanuginosa** A prostrate, mat-forming succulent, shown here with the rosette *Echeveria runyonii*. Hardier than many. RHS H2, USDA 8a-11.

**4 Titanopsis calcarea** Yellow flowers appear in autumn and winter. AGM. RHS H2, USDA 8a-11.

**5 Crassula rupestris subsp. marnieriana** See page 67.

**6 x Graptoveria 'Debbie'** Purple-pink flowers appear in winter above pink leaves. RHS H2, USDA 9b-11.

**7 Echeveria 'Phyllis Collis'** In full sun leaves change in colour from blue-grey to pink. AGM. RHS H2, USDA 10a-11.

**8 Euphorbia trigona f. rubra** Striking and easy to care for. USDA 9b-11.

**9 Aeonium arboreum** Pink-edged green and rosettes on corky stems. RHS H1C, USDA 10a-11.

**10 Sedum treleasei** Thick and fleshy leaves that are a pale blue-green. RHS H2, USDA 10a-11.

**11 Haworthia pumila** Pointed, dark-green leaves with white warts. AGM. RHS H2, USDA 10a-11.

**12 Aloe mitriformis** Thick, short leaves acquire reddish tint in dry conditions. RHS H2, USDA 9b-11.

**13 Echeveria nodulosa 'Painted Beauty'** Pretty pink flowers above striking striped rosettes. USDA 10a-11.



This collection of succulents in an old enamel bowl, demonstrates the diversity of form and texture of these wonderful plants. When combining succulents consider both how the forms and textures will work together, and for best results try to combine plants that need the same watering regime.



Succulents of the same colouring but with differing sizes of rosette and habit can make a subtle but interesting composition. These three blue-leaf succulents tone beautifully with the glaze of the container to form a simple and striking piece of living sculpture.

▷ providing plenty of stones, crocks or hydroleca are used, and watering is kept to a minimum. In more permanent containers covering the soil surface with fine slate, grit or stone chippings helps prevent wet soil from splashing on to the foliage.

Succulents appeal to collectors, plant lovers, flower arrangers and anyone with an eye for the unusual. Most are small in stature, so ideal to collect on a windowsill. Many succulents, especially echeverias, are widely available in garden centres, florists and houseplant retailers. A wider range of more interesting varieties can be found at plant fairs and specialist nurseries. □

#### USEFUL INFORMATION

- **The British Cactus and Succulent Society** has 80 branches around the UK for collectors and enthusiasts to meet and learn more about these amazing plants. Most branches have shows where you can see displays and buy plants. Tel 01708 447778. Web society.bcsc.org.uk
- For where to buy see page 94.

#### 1 *Echeveria pulvinata* 'Frosty'

All parts are densely covered with silvery white hairs. RHS H2, USDA 9b-11.

#### 2 *Echeveria* 'Lola'

Striking looking pale lilac rosettes. RHS H2, USDA 9b-11.

#### 3 x *Graptoveria* 'Fred Ives'

Hybrid of *Graptopetalum paraguayense* and *Echeveria gibbiflora*. USDA 9b-11.

#### 4 *Echeveria elegans*

Rosettes of whitish-green leaves. AGM. RHS H2, USDA 9a-12.

#### 5 x *Pachyveria* 'Calypso'

Flower-like rosettes of copper-pink tipped, blue-grey leaves. RHS H2, USDA 9a-12.

#### 6 *Adromischus cooperi*

Dwarf succulent with tubular silver-green leaves. AGM. RHS H2, USDA 9a-11.

#### 7 *Echeveria prolifica*

Tender succulent forming clusters of silver green rosettes. RHS H2, USDA 9a-12.

#### 8 *Euphorbia obesa*

Ball-shaped succulent exquisitely segmented and ribbed. AGM. RHS H2, USDA 10a-11.

#### 9 *Sedum morganianum*

Its trailing stems give it the name burro's tail. AGM. RHS H2, USDA 10b-11.



MANY THANKS TO FIONA WIDVYSS OF BLUE LEAF PLANTS FOR HER HELP WITH THIS FEATURE.