



## Sedum & Sempervivum

Combinations of hardy varieties of plants. Lower varieties often, but sedum and sempervivum are the popular stars of outdoor containers, fairy gardens and trough gardens, and with good reason. They complement each other well, are showy, and have great texture and color. Best of all, they are easy care. Given a weatherproof container, they can stay outdoors all year.

Sedums and sempervivums are easily recognized by their distinctive fleshy foliage in shades ranging from greens to reds to gray. Depending on species or cultivar, sedums will flower in spring, summer or fall with showy, star-shaped flowers in clusters of yellow, pink, red, white or rose. Sempervivums tend to have pink or white flowers in the fall.

Sedum species and cultivars are appearing on top ten perennial lists everywhere these days: top ten drought tolerant, top ten rock garden, top ten butterfly, top ten green roof, top ten groundcover, top ten favorites of garden writers...and so on.

Growth habit in sedum varies from low thick mats that grow

happily between stepping stones or taller upright clump-forming varieties of plants. Lower varieties often, but not always, flower in late spring or summer while taller varieties tend to have late-season blooms. The tall, upright clumps and seed heads remain attractive in the winter landscape.

Sedums make good companion plants and are perfect for rock gardens, the quintessential "nooks and crannies" plant and are easily grown in any well-drained soil. Aptly named stonecrop, they often grow naturally in rocky dry sites - happy in average to somewhat poor but well-drained soils in full sun. Some varieties tolerate light shade but flower stems can become floppy given too much shade.



Sedum is easy to grow in well-drained soil.

Early flowering varieties of sedum tend to be low, creeping or mat forming types. Sedum ellacombianum is an old garden favorite, just 4-6 inches tall. Its

light green foliage is topped with lemon-yellow flowers in June.

'Weihenstephaner Gold' is a uniquely textured 4-5 inch tall groundcover. Attractive scalloped foliage is topped by golden yellow flowers in June. Showy red seed heads and foliage are highlights in the fall.

'Larinum Park' aka Salt and Pepper Plant is known as the sedum for shade. It has dense spiky foliage on creeping stems and white flower spikes in May-June. Salt and Pepper grows in part shade to shade and prefers a slightly moister soil than other sedums.

'Angelina' is a must-have low-growing sedum. This multi-award winner has brilliant golden yellow, evergreen, needle-shaped foliage that becomes tinged with red in colder weather. Yellow flowers appear in June or July.

Tall clump-forming varieties of sedum are suitable for very large containers or garden beds. They tend to flower in fall. The rosy-headed 'Autumn Joy' is probably the most well-known. Large, dark pink flower heads appear from August to October starting out a shade of salmon

and turning to russet in late fall. The flower heads are good for cutting and drying and if left uncut in the garden, provide winter interest. A classic fall garden combination is 'Autumn Joy' planted with asters, Rudbeckia, purple coneflower, and ornamental grasses.

Sedum 'Matrona' offers a stunning color contrast, with large plum-gray foliage on purple stems and large soft pink flower heads. 'Black Jack' emerges green and light purple in spring and quickly darkens into a very deep purple. Pink flower clusters open in late summer.



Hens and chicks are an ideal choice for rock gardens.

A trailing fall favorite is October Stonecrop (S. seboldii) with tidy, rounded gray-green leaves and dusty-pink flowers. The leaf edges turn pink as the days grow cooler. This sedum looks great spilling over the edges of large containers or walls.

Sempervivums (hens and chicks), though closely related to sedums and sharing the same preference for well-drained soils and full sun, have an entirely different habit of growth. They form low rosettes of fleshy leaves and spread by forming small

offshoots (chicks) from under a larger, central rosette (you guessed it, the hen). When the main rosette fades away the "chicks" grow on to flowering size. Use these plants for filling niches and mixing with sedums and other low-growing succulents in rock garden beds or containers.

Sempervivum 'Cobweb' is intriguing, named for pale green leaves covered with fine silvery webs. Fuzzy rose-pink flowers emerge in August. 'Royal Ruby' offers distinctive dark wine red and pink flowers on tall stems in August. 'Silverine' has attractive rosettes of succulent red tinted, green leaves with fuzzy white flowers held on big stems coming from the larger rosettes in August. After flowering, the large rosette disappears and the smaller rosettes take over.