

Niagara College Greenhouse & Nursery Success Sheet No. 54

Sedum

Folklore

Sedums are considered Old World treasures and are associated with mythology. In ancient Scandinavia, they were called “Thor’s Helper” and were believed to drive off demons and guard homes if planted on roofs. The Romans called them “Beard of Jupiter” and planted them on roofs to guard against lightning. This myth spread throughout Europe to Ireland, where the expression “A wee cabbage sat down on my roof” was common.

Description

Sedums have many textures, including waxy, woolly, satiny, fringed and tufted. Some are large and some grow only a quarter inch in diameter in tight clumps that have a tendency to produce interesting mounds.

A wide range of colours exists, from silver-blues to the darkest purples to delicate pinks. Most of the plants show their best colour in the spring and again in the fall.

Forms are varied and include rosettes and tight balls. Some sedums look like artichoke heads, and some resemble stones.

Planting and Care

All plants may be grown in full sun. Where summer temperatures reach over 30° C. for extended periods of time, best results are obtained by growing sedums in morning sun with filtered shade in the afternoon. In hot weather, sedums will tend to close to protect themselves from hot sun. Providing some

shade will prevent this and preserve their colour longer.

Sedums are excellent container plants, needing only a small amount of soil. They also perform well in raised beds, where they can be easily viewed. Immediately after planting, shade them for several days and water them thoroughly, allowing the soil to become dry between waterings. Provide good drainage, and keep the crown above the soil line.

Soil

All sedums will grow in most kinds of soil, but good drainage is vital for their survival. A mixture of equal parts soil and sharp sand is best. The sand will help to create adequate drainage.

A 5-10-10 fertilizer is recommended once or twice during the spring. Bone meal can be added to the soil at any time.

Pests and Diseases

The name “sedum” means “live forever,” an indication of the hardiness of the plant, but it is not always free of pests, the most common of which is the aphid. Insecticidal soap or a garden spray should take care of the problem.

Mealy bugs can be found occasionally and are more likely in potted plants. Most sprays will take care of the problem. If the insects persist, a systemic garden spray should solve your problem.

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