

NEST

MAGAZINE



COURTESY OF NEST REALTY

HOW TO: PLANT A SUCCULENT ARRANGEMENT

*Who doesn't love a beautiful succulent arrangement? The muted tones, interesting textures, and universal appeal make them an ideal decorative element. We checked in with Brandon Mckeown and Thurston Pope, the genius creators behind **THE COASTAL SUCCULENT** in Wilmington, NC, to learn how you can make your own beautiful arrangement.*



Gather Your Tools + Supplies:

- Large serving spoon
- Small spoon
- 1" paint brush
- A clean surface to work
- Your hands—don't be afraid to get messy!
- Glass vessel
- Sand
- Small river rocks
- Small pebbles
- Soil
- 4–6 succulents

Choose Your Vessel:

THE OPTIONS ARE ENDLESS: choose something that matches your aesthetic—a repurposed teacup, terracotta pot, glass terrarium, or pottery. For this arrangement, head to your local craft store to find a clear glass vessel, 8"–10" round in diameter, and 4"–6" deep.



NEED A BIT MORE GUIDANCE AND INSPIRATION?

Check out The Coastal Succulent's website for more tips and to sign up for one of their Planting Parties! Follow on Instagram for inspiring, drool-worthy photos.

📷 [TheCoastalSucculent](#) | [coastalsucculent.com](#)



THE GUYS BEHIND THE PLANTS:

Brandon Mckeown and Thurston Pope,
Owners, The Coastal Succulent



DID YOU KNOW?

After planting your succulents you only have to lightly mist them once a month.

Layering Your Rocks:

LAYER 1—SAND: Using your large spoon, coat the bottom of the vessel with ½”–1” of sand. You can use any type of sand—white, colored, black, etc.

LAYER 2—SMALL RIVER ROCKS: Using your small spoon, place small river rocks around the edges of the vessel, ½”–1” high, coming 1” in towards the middle. You’ll want to keep at least a 3”–round circle in the center of the vessel open for soil (Layer 4).

LAYER 3—SMALL PEBBLES: Using your large spoon, add a layer of small pebbles on top of the river rocks—again, ½”–1” high, coming 1” into the middle. (You can find these tiny pebbles at a pet store, labeled aquarium pebbles!)

LAYER 4—SOIL: Using your hands, fill in the center hole, and fill all the way to the top rim of the vessel. Lightly pack down the soil with the back of your hand. Mckeown and Pope share, “We use cactus or succulent soil, but you can also use regular potting soil, mixed with a bit of your sand, creating a porous texture.”

Placing Your Plants:

CHOOSE 4-6 PLANTS: Mckeown and Pope

suggest **Jade**, **Haworthia**, **Crassula**, and **Echevaria**. “We love mixing color, texture, and height to create dimension and keep the arrangement dynamic,” shares Mckeown. For this arrangement, they used purple, deep green, light green, and white succulents, along with a taller jade plant called **Donkey’s Tail**. “You have the chance to be totally creative, so if you want an all purple arrangement—go for it,” laughs Pope.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN PLANTING, plan out your arrangement next to your vessel, so you have a general idea of where the plants will look best. Then one at a time, remove the plant from the container you purchased it in, and knock off the existing soil, exposing the roots. “Succulent roots are fine and silky, and a bit delicate, so take your time and gently massage the soil off with your hand,” advises Pope.

USING THE SMALL SPOON, take out a spoonful of soil where each plant will go, creating 3”–deep pockets (almost all the way down to the sand base). You’ll want to give each plant a bit of breathing room from the next, but it’s okay if the roots end up slightly touching.

PLANT BY PLANT, place them into their pocket, packing the soil up around them as you go. (It’s okay if you need to shift a plant

and reposition so that they all fit.) Use your fingers to firmly pack the soil around the root base, adding additional soil if needed.

USE THE PAINT BRUSH to carefully dust off any soil that got onto the leaves. You can finish your arrangement with the same small river rocks or aquarium pebbles. “You can also try preserved moss, sold in sheets at craft stores,” shares Mckeown.

Care For Your Creation!

Now that you’ve created your masterpiece, you want it to last as long as possible.

FIRST, LIGHT EXPOSURE: These babies like as much “bright shade” as they can get. Place your arrangement within 3’ of a window, where it can get loads of indirect sunlight. Don’t place in a west-facing windowsill, as direct evening sun can actually burn the leaves, and they will turn brown in spots.

SECONDLY, LIGHT MIST: You’ll only need to lightly mist once a month! To check if your plant needs water, insert a toothpick to pierce the soil—if it’s bone dry, it needs water. If there is any moisture, give it a week and check again. Once it needs water, using a spray bottle on the mist setting, give 3–4 sprays at the root base of each plant, using regular tap water.