

## Digging Deep

...Continued from page OH6

Aloe-aloe vera is plant that needs to be in a container in everyone's kitchen. It's an excellent first air remedy for burns, bites, and scratches. I break off a leaf and pour the thick gel directly on the wound. Aloe vera relieves itching and pain almost instantly.

Schlumbergera-Christmas Cactus is a favorite of every family for the holidays. The tips of the plant begin to grow darker, then magically a flower bursts into bloom in shades of pink, red, or white. They need more care than other cactus and are worth the trouble.

Hylotelephium-Formerly called a Sedum, Autumn Joy is a favorite low maintenance mainstay in my garden containers. Deep rose enation are borne on burgundy stems with green-blue leaves. Sedum is best pruned back in spring, then it sprouts again bearing clusters of flush pink flowers from summer through fall. You can break off a stem to plant anywhere. It grows with little water.

Stenocereus thurberi-organ pipe cactus is covered in spines and can grow to twenty-five feet with numerous ribs, but in a container it will remain small, which is the only way I'd want this cactus around. It boasts a pretty white cactus flower and requires only a few drops of water a month to thrive in a pot.

### How to grow succulents

There are thousands of succulents and cacti that will adapt well in Lamorinda gardens. Choose the forms, colors, and flowering patterns that you prefer. Succulents are excellent in rock gardens as well as containers and cacti may used as privacy hedges. Peruse your local garden center, ask lots of questions, and get the information you need about growing patterns, especially height, width, and root depth. Succulents prefer bright light, thriving in cool nights with warm days. They aren't that fussy about soil as long as it drains well. Add sand or perlite to increase aeration and drainage. In the summer months, succulents are thirsty. In winter, they may only require water every couple of months. Overwatering is the main cause of the demise of succulents. Better dry than die!

Cacti are macho plants. Use caution with these menacing monsters. Those spiky thorns protect the plants from animals and humans. Always wear long sleeves, pants, and gloves when handling cacti. My sister created a cacti fence around her barn to keep out the predators. It works! Succulents make wonderful dormitory gifts for university students who want a bit of nature inside but have little time for nurturing.

Looking back, my brother made a great choice for his plot of land. As water prices rise, we may be wise to look to these prickly, pretty, and practical plants as a viable alternative to living green.



Who says cactus don't grow in pine groves? Pine nuts and tequila anyone?  
Photo Cynthia Brian

DESIGN  
INSTALLATION  
IRRIGATION  
DRAINAGE  
STONEWORK  
CONCRETE WORK  
DECKS  
FENCES  
PATIOS  
LAWNS  
PONDS  
CLEANUP &  
HAULING

# BLUE RIDGE



925-258-9233

CELL: 510-847-6160

LANDSCAPE Co.

BLUE JAY FELDMAN

OWNER/OPERATOR

WWW.BLUERIDGELC.COM

LICENSED  
INSURED  
Lic# 818633

## McDonnell Nursery



family owned since 1933

Trees • Shrubs • Vines • Annuals • Perennials  
Vegetables • Containers • Statuary & Fountains  
Indoor Plants • Decorative Items

www.mcdonnellnursery.com

196 Moraga Way • Orinda • (925) 254-3713 • Open Daily

## Garden Lights landscape & pool development inc.

Garden Lights is an Award Winning  
Landscape Design-Build Firm  
Offering Services in . . .

- Landscape Design & Installation  
*Planting - Masonry - Concrete - Carpentry*
- Low-voltage Landscape Lighting
- Pool / Spa Design, Installation & Remodels
- Water Gardens, Ponds & Waterfalls



Design & Install with just one call.

925-254-4797

Free Consultations

Serving the Lamorinda Area for 18 years. Bonded – Licensed & Insured Lic. #702845