

Succulent Superheroes

THIRD GRADE

Succulents are interesting; not only can they survive on little to no water, but they can also grow entirely new plants from their leaves or stems. This is called propagation. Plant propagation sparks kids' curiosity and enables them to better understand plant life, growth, and development in a very personal way. Succulents propagate in several ways, including cuttings, leaves, offsets, or seeds. In this activity, students will use leaves to propagate new plants.

SUBJECT

SCIENCE

TIME

30 MIN

+

Regular watering

MATERIALS

Book of choice from the Garden Library

Succulent cuttings to retrieve leaves from

Newspaper

Newspaper Pot Instruction Sheet

Tomato paste cans or dowels, 8

Potting soil, enough to fill nursery containers

Spoons or trowels, 1 per student



DIRECTIONS

- Prior to the activity, cut a few succulent heads from the succulent pot in the school garden or other succulents on the school grounds. Be sure that the cuttings have enough leaves for at least one per student.
- Find a shady spot in the garden and read a book from the Garden Library; a book about plant reproduction would be fitting.
- Start a discussion about plant reproduction by referencing back to the book, prompting students to talk about some of the ways plants reproduce. Then explain to students that succulents are a special kind of plant because they can reproduce, or propagate, in many ways. Students will grow a brand new succulent plant from just one leaf. Succulents are also special because they don't need a lot of water to grow, and they store water in their leaves.
- Have students fill the nursery pots almost to the top and tamp down the soil.
- Distribute the succulent cuttings to groups of students. Instruct students to gently twist a leaf at the spot where the leaf meets the stem. The leaf should fall right off. It is important to retrieve the entire leaf, so students may have to try a couple of times.
- Have students place their leaves on top of the soil (do not press it into the soil). That's it!
- Return to the classroom and wait a few days before watering, so the fleshy end of the leaf dries out a bit. After that, water regularly.
- Within a few weeks, you should start to see roots growing from the end of the leaf and then a teen-tiny succulent plant.
- The original leaf will eventually dry out, and the new succulents can be taken home or planted back into the succulent pot in the garden.
- Optional extension: Record and graph the growth of the succulent at weekly intervals.

SOURCE

- BCK Programs | Succulent Superheroes
- Google Image Search | [Succulent Propagation from Leaf](#)



How to Make Newspaper Pots



1. Fold newspaper to about the same length as the dowel or can.



2. Wrap the newspaper around the dowel, leaving a ½" - 1" overhang.



3. Fold the bottoms toward the center.



4. Fold the top down to secure



5. Fill with soil.

