

Rare & Unusual Succulents Handbook

Adromischus, Gasteria, Cotyledon & more

FREE DOWNLOAD

AGreenNest Plant Guide

For collectors who want something different: the silver 'Panda' Adromischus, the tongue-like Gasteria, the pebble Cotyledon, and the trailing, sometimes bizarre Senecio. This handbook gathers the unusual genera that reward a curious grower.

What's Inside

- Bear's Paw
- Gasteria
- Moonstone
- Plover Egg Plant
- String of Bananas
- String of Pearls
- General Care Principles
- Frequently Asked Questions

Bear's Paw - Cotyledon orbiculata

Each leaf tip has three little 'toes' -- that's healthy, not damage.

Care at a glance: light: lots of bright light and some direct sun for the best colour; water deeply every ~16 days (far less in winter); a gritty, free-draining succulent mix; happiest around 45-78F; propagate by a single leaf laid on dry soil or a stem cutting left to callus then rooted; keep it away from cats and dogs.

Quick facts

- Light: lots of bright light and some direct sun for the best colour.
- Water: deeply every ~16 days, far less in winter.
- Temperature: 45-78F (7-26C).
- Humidity: dry air is fine.
- Soil: a gritty, free-draining succulent mix.
- Propagate: a single leaf laid on dry soil or a stem cutting left to callus then rooted.
- Pet: keep away from cats and dogs.

The paw shape is unmistakable once you see it.

Gasteria - Gasteria batesiana

Rough tongue-like leaves take almost no direct sun.

Care at a glance: light: low to bright indirect light; keep it out of hot, direct sun; water deeply every ~18 days (far less in winter); a gritty, free-draining succulent mix; happiest around 50-82F; propagate by an offset pup pulled from the base or a single leaf laid on dry soil; pet-safe.

Quick facts

- Light: low to bright indirect light; keep it out of hot, direct sun.

- Water: deeply every ~18 days, far less in winter.
- Temperature: 50-82F (10-28C).
- Humidity: average home humidity is fine.
- Soil: a gritty, free-draining succulent mix.
- Propagate: an offset pup pulled from the base or a single leaf laid on dry soil.
- Pet: generally safe around pets.

The name comes from the stomach-shaped flowers.

Moonstone - Pachyphytum oviferum

Chalky pink-blue beads; the powder rubs off, so handle by the pot.

Care at a glance: light: lots of bright light and some direct sun for the best colour; water deeply every ~16 days (far less in winter); a gritty, free-draining succulent mix; happiest around 45-80F; propagate by a single leaf laid on dry soil or a stem cutting left to callus then rooted; keep it away from cats and dogs.

Quick facts

- Light: lots of bright light and some direct sun for the best colour.
- Water: deeply every ~16 days, far less in winter.
- Temperature: 45-80F (7-27C).
- Humidity: dry air is fine.
- Soil: a gritty, free-draining succulent mix.
- Propagate: a single leaf laid on dry soil or a stem cutting left to callus then rooted.
- Pet: keep away from cats and dogs.

It is a favourite for pastel-coloured succulent bowls.

Plover Egg Plant - Adromischus maculatus

A single leaf laid on soil roots into a new plant.

Care at a glance: light: bright indirect light, with a little gentle morning or evening sun; water deeply every ~18 days (far less in winter); a gritty, free-draining succulent mix; happiest around 50-80F; propagate by a single leaf laid on dry soil; keep it away from cats and dogs.

Quick facts

- Light: bright indirect light, with a little gentle morning or evening sun.
- Water: deeply every ~18 days, far less in winter.
- Temperature: 50-80F (10-27C).
- Humidity: average home humidity is fine.
- Soil: a gritty, free-draining succulent mix.
- Propagate: a single leaf laid on dry soil.
- Pet: keep away from cats and dogs.

The 'eggs' are natural leaf spots, not disease.

String of Bananas - Senecio radicans

Banana-shaped leaves trail fast in a sunny spot.

Care at a glance: light: lots of bright light and some direct sun for the best colour; water deeply every ~16 days (far less in winter); a gritty, free-draining succulent mix; happiest around 55-85F; propagate by a stem cutting left to callus then rooted; keep it away from cats and dogs.

Quick facts

- Light: lots of bright light and some direct sun for the best colour.
- Water: deeply every ~16 days, far less in winter.
- Temperature: 55-85F (13-29C).
- Humidity: dry air is fine.
- Soil: a gritty, free-draining succulent mix.
- Propagate: a stem cutting left to callus then rooted.
- Pet: keep away from cats and dogs.

It is the faster, chunkier cousin of String of Pearls.

String of Pearls - Senecio rowleyanus

Water the soil, not the beads -- they rot if kept wet.

Care at a glance: light: lots of bright light and some direct sun for the best colour; water deeply every ~16 days (far less in winter); a gritty, free-draining succulent mix; happiest around 55-85F; propagate by a stem cutting left to callus then rooted; keep it away from cats and dogs.

Quick facts

- Light: lots of bright light and some direct sun for the best colour.
- Water: deeply every ~16 days, far less in winter.
- Temperature: 55-85F (13-29C).
- Humidity: dry air is fine.
- Soil: a gritty, free-draining succulent mix.
- Propagate: a stem cutting left to callus then rooted.
- Pet: keep away from cats and dogs.

The round leaves are actually modified stems storing water.

General Care Principles

No matter the species in this handbook, a handful of principles carry most of the weight. Get these right and the individual notes above become fine-tuning.

Match the plant to the light: sun-lovers go in the brightest window or under a grow light; shade-lovers go in east or north light. Wrong light is the single most common cause of failure.

Water on the plant's schedule, not the calendar. Soak thoroughly, then let the soil dry before the next drink. In winter, ease right off - most of these plants want a cool, dry rest.

Use the right soil and a draining pot. Free-draining for succulents, moisture-retentive but aerated for ferns and foliage. A drainage hole is non-negotiable.

Propagate to multiply. Almost every plant here can be cloned from a leaf, offset, division, or cutting - see each species for its best method.

Frequently Asked Questions

How often should I really water?

Forget frequent sips. Soak the soil completely, then let it dry out fully before the next drink. In winter most of these plants want a long, dry rest. The lift test (light pot = dry) beats any calendar.

My plant is stretching and pale - what does that mean?

It wants more light. Move it to a brighter window or add a full-spectrum LED grow light. New growth will be compact and colourful; the stretched part will not undo itself, so behead and re-root the top if you like.

What soil should I use?

A free-draining mix is non-negotiable. For succulents that means gritty, sandy soil in a pot with a real drainage hole. For leafy types a peat-free houseplant mix is fine. Sitting in wet soil is the fastest route to rot.

Is this plant safe around my pets?

We note pet safety per species in this guide. 'Pet-safe' means it is not on the usual toxic lists, but no plant is food - keep curious cats and dogs from chewing leaves, and call a vet if you are worried.

Enjoyed this free handbook?

There is plenty more where this came from. Visit AGreenNest.com for 200+ free plant-care articles, free growing tools, and more free ebooks - no signup, no paywall.

[Back to AGreenNest.com](https://AGreenNest.com) -> [Browse free articles](#)

(c) 2026 AGreenNest. A free plant-care handbook. Not affiliated with any brand named herein.