

# autumn joy



*Sedum (showy stonecrop) "sp. autumn joy" Family: Crassulaceae*

**Sedum is a succulent perennial that is very easy to grow. Its versatility is only surpassed by the year round beauty it brings to the garden. If you have a dry sunny area that needs a low maintenance plant there is a variety of Sedum that is sure to please even the most finicky gardener.**

By David Dales

finally, when the color has expired from the flower, a beautiful amber color puts on a wonderful display all winter. The dried flowers can also be brought indoors to make decorative arrangements.

One of the benefits of Sedum is that the plant will tolerate dry soil. Sedum prefers that the soil be well drained as well to ward of the chance of fungus.

**S**edum is a wonderful resilient plant that no perennial garden should be without. They are derived from the Crassulaceae family. This family of plants is mostly succulents, meaning they store water in their leaves. There are approximately 400 species of this plant type in the northern hemisphere that vary from shrubs to groundcovers. Both the foliage and the flowers of Sedum put on a dazzling display of color, which ranges from yellow, orange, pink, red, greens, and white. *Sedum (showy stonecrop) "sp. autumn joy"* pictured above is one of the most popular and readily available varieties. Its popularity stems from the plant's ability to offer year-round value. It quickly grows to a two-foot clump of green-silver leaves. As the summer progresses, large flat heads of green buds start to appear. Once late August arrives the progression of flowers begins with light pink; September brings a deep rose color; October's transition is rusty red;



*Sedum rubrotinctum*



*Sedum glaucophyllum*

This being said, the plant is extremely low maintenance. Because of the resilience of Sedum, many times you will see it used between highways where it gets very little water. In late summer the vibrant colors of red really stand out.

Planting should

commence in the spring in soil rich in organics. They can be planted anywhere from two feet to six inches apart depending on the variety. Dig the whole twice as big as the root ball and then back-fill it with soil just enough to accommodate the space of the ball. Make sure that where the stem and the root ball meet is level with the existing soil line. Initially water the plants in well, and periodically water to ensure the roots become established.

Because of the myriad of cultivars, choosing the type of Sedum that fits your landscaping style is as easy as a trip to your local garden center. Sedum (*showy stonecrop*) "*sp. autumn joy*" is excellent for borders because of its upright mounding characteristics. Many Sedum varieties are used as ground covers. Sedum (*spurium "Dragons Blood"*) for example, displays a deep crimson red flower with dark green foliage. When placed in a large grouping this plant makes quite a showing. There are also variegated varieties such as Sedum (*spurium "Variegatum"*) that give the garden depth with its pink and white

contrasts. Another wonderful attribute of Sedum in the garden is its ability to attract butterflies. They can be seen as soon as the color flushes out of the flower stems.

Sedum can be purchased in an array of colors and varieties from shrubs to groundcover. Because of their succulent characteristics they are hardy and drought resistant. They also offer year round beauty. Whether deigning a perennial garden for the first time or adding to an existing space, Sedum are a must for the well rounded gardener.



*Crooked Yellow Sedum (Sedum reflexum)*

**Photos and article courtesy of Keith Frederick, President Environmental Landscape Associates, Inc. Doylestown, PA. 1.800.ELA.9252**

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