

*We hope everyone is doing well this summer. Since we have had to cancel all of our meetings last season, we thought we might provide some food for thought for our membership. please watch our Facebook page for news about our fall schedule. Enjoy!*

## **Strongylodon macrobotrys: The Jade Vine** *Sean Diamond*

There are many wonders to be held in the plant kingdom, whether it be interesting shapes and growth forms, fascinating adaptations for survival, or wonderful fragrances and colors. This article will be exploring the latter, and more specifically will be focusing on a plant who is exemplary in the realm of color.

*Strongylodon macrobotrys*, commonly referred to as the Jade vine, is a woody vine of the Fabaceae family, making it a close relative to peas and beans. Native to the tropical forests of the Philippines (where it is locally referred to as Tayabak), it is found growing alongside riverbanks and bodies of water, although it is not an aqueous plant.

The Jade vine was discovered in 1841 by members of the United States Exploring Expedition, while exploring the slopes of Mount Makiling (a dormant volcano) on the island of Luzon. Jade vine is a large, rambling vine that can reach lengths of up to 50'. It requires moderately moist soil that is still well draining and thrives best under full sun. The dark green leaves, which grow in three's, contrast nicely against its magnificent flowers for which it is renowned for.

The flowers are a stunning shade of blue green, which is exceptionally rare in the plant kingdom. The flowers hang down in a large cluster and last for a few weeks or so. Jade vine has been described as a plant "better suited for outdoors or a large greenhouse" given it's size requirements for flowering; the stem thickness must reach at least 1" in diameter.

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[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Jade\\_vine\\_\(70200\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Jade_vine_(70200).jpg)







## Succulent Containers by Kathy Smith

If you grow and collect succulents, you might have noticed the popularity of different succulents (and cacti) planted together in one container (usually over-watered, in the shade at the 'Big Box Stores'). While I have specific specimen plants that I keep in individual containers, I like to plant what I call 'combo pots'. I try to keep plants together that have the similar growing habits (I don't plant cactus and succulents together).

The best part is, you can find fun and unconventional containers for this project. I like to visit thrift shops, Salvation Army, garage sales, etc. If I find a ceramic container that doesn't have a drainage hole it's easy to drill one. I use Bosch Natural Stone Tile & Masonry Drill Bits (you can find them at Lowe's).

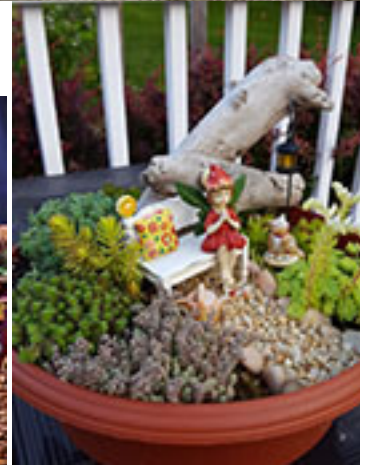


When I find a container, I try to coordinate the plants to go along with the color of the pot. I keep in mind the color wheel and use complimentary colors (that is always pleasing to the eye). I also use an 'odd' number of plants. If possible, the tallest plant is slightly off-center and I work from there. I never hesitate to use cuttings in these arrangements either.

I typically use some kind of top dressing. Gravel is available in a variety of colors (I've become a gravel-hoarder), Aquarium gravel works great, you can even mix colors. I pick a color that will show off the plants and look nice with the container.



Creating these containers with hardy succulents works great too. Hypertufa containers work well and you don't have to worry about them cracking during the winter freeze. I've also used plastic and heavy glazed containers that stay outside all year long. I'll put the pots next to the house in the winter to give them an added bit of protection. I'm always surprised how they come back every year.



Finally, this is something to have fun with. You don't have to go out and buy special plants just for this, check out what you already have. I've even gotten a little creative and collected some cuttings to use in containers.



While most plants will not stay in the planted containers long-term (you can usually get 1-3 years depending on the rate of growth), it's fun to use a little creativity and see what you can come up with.

Do you want to see more? Check out my YouTube channel (Kathy's Containers) and the recent video I made: <https://youtu.be/mv-i-klOQrc>

# Pachypodium – Beautiful and Super Easy to Maintain

By: Melissa Mezgec

MWCSS Succulent Topics

June 2020

Pachypodium, native to southern Africa and Madagascar, is a genus of succulent spine-bearing trees and shrubs. They are unique looking and easy to maintain as indoor houseplants (I should know – I’ve had mine since the late ‘90s!).

## Terminology

The term “Pachypodium” is a Latin form from Greek “pachus,” meaning thick, and “podion,” meaning foot. Hence, Pachypodium means “thick footed” (as shown in the photo).

The thick, swollen stem of the Pachypodium grows upward with the leaves surrounding the crown, gradually falling and then growing new ones as the plant ages.

## Species

While there are 25 known species of Pachypodium, the most-common ones are *Pachypodium lamerei* (my plant type) and *Pachypodium geayi*. In fact, these two species alone account for at least 95 percent of the plants in gardens. Although they share the same care requirements, they can be difficult to distinguish. However, *Pachypodium lamerei* has a light grey trunk with green mixed in, while *Pachypodium geayi* has more of a metallic grey trunk.

## Temperature/Watering/Light Requirements (Ohio)

For the most part, Pachypodium are native to summer rainfall areas. When the weather starts turning warm/hot here in Ohio (usually in May), I take my plant outdoors and it typically remains in the same spot all summer long. It thrives on the full summer sun and can withstand torrential rainfalls. It remains outside up until September or so, when the weather starts to turn. It is then that I bring my Pachypodium indoors for the fall/winter.

In the winter, I severely cut back on watering (a good soaking once every one-to-two months or so is all it requires). A sunny window/sliding door is the best place to position this plant, but it does survive winter in areas with little-to-no light (not optimal, but it will survive).

## Height

A mature Pachypodium can reach up to 20 feet in height. After 22 years or so, my plant (as shown below) is currently 3 feet 3 inches tall (measured from top of soil), so it has grown approximately 3 feet in 22 years.

## Precautions

This plant contains a latex sap which is poisonous. However, the plant’s tough hooked spines will most likely deter most animals and small children. Out of an abundance of caution, though, it is best to keep them away.

## Conclusion

It’s been very rewarding to see my plant grow and thrive throughout the decades, with very little maintenance. I highly recommend this unique-looking, easy-to-care-for and personally rewarding plant!





## Seedling to Specimen Plant

by *Tim Malinich*

*MWCSS Succulent Topics*

*June 2020*

Growing cacti and succulents from seed is fun and it lets you collect many more species of plants than you could get from the local garden center, often for pennies per plant. But, just how long will it take to get a decent plant from a seed? The answer, not much time at all.

That whole process may only take a couple months for most seedlings. *Faucaria*, *Gymnocalycium*, *Copiapoa*, *Stapelia*, *Ceropegia*—to name just a few—all follow this quick seed to seeding time table. Once the seedlings are up and growing, keep them in the same small seedling pot; do not transplant. Succulent seedlings like to be crowded. When they share the pot with others, they can better handle swings in moisture and temperature.

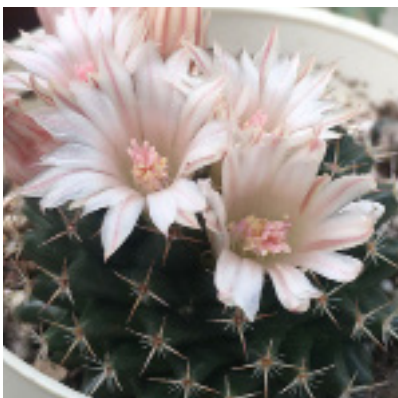
I have started to experiment with nurse plants if I have had poor germination and only one or two seedlings growing. I will take a leaf from a jelly bean plant or burro's tail and drop it into the pot. The lone cactus seedlings "seem" to do better and the nurse plant can be removed during transplanting or just cut off at ground level when the cacti are established.



*These Euphorbia meloformis were sown in 2017, transplanted in 2018 and began producing flowers and seed in 2019.*

Grow your seedlings much as you would any other cactus or succulent. You may have to watch watering more closely to avoid soaking seedlings with a limited root system or provide them some shelter from full sun. Fertilize regularly. I use a combination of slow release fertilizer early and mid season and liquid fertilizer all summer. By the end of the year, your seedlings should be shoulder to shoulder and begging to be transplanted. Don't listen to them, leave them in the pot through the winter season. Your plants are now one year old.

When good growing weather resumes the following year, move them to individual small pots or several to a community pot. Again, provide ample water, light and fertilizer. You may have to pot up plants from the community pots during the summer as they mature. By the end of the growing season your two year old plants will be in small individual pots or in groups of two or three in a community pot. Early in their third year, the plants will make respectable small show plants. However, after a flush of growth in the spring they will begin to look very nice and fill out anyone's collection. Depending on the species, some will even begin to bloom their third year. Getting a respectable specimen plant from seed is not a life long project. In fact, most species will grow to a fine show plant after just three years, or a sale plant in two. So, don't ignore seedlings as an option when increasing your collection. A packet of seed and a couple years is all you need.



*Mammillaria perbella sown 2017, flowering 2020.*

We have had a few propagation presentations at our regular meetings and have covered seed starting in detail. To review the most important points:

- >Use small containers and a well-drained mix
- >Tiny seeds do not need to be covered
- >Enclose in a plastic bag or cover to retain moisture
- >Provide bottom heat
- >Gradually remove them from the high humidity germination bag



*Succulent seedlings like to be crowded.*



*If plants are too small to be on their own, you may need to first transplant them to community pots until they mature a bit more.*