
CACTUS and SUCCULENT SOCIETY of NEW MEXICO

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LITHOPS CULTIVATION

Lithops need lots of sun during nearly the whole year. A little shade is appropriate if it gets extremely hot, over 90°F in the summertime. Most of them tend to start growth in the springtime or early summer when the days warm up nicely. Start to water more often when you notice growth. Remember to provide adequate ventilation. No plant can take both intense heat and bright sunlight simultaneously.

The cooler days of late summer and early fall are the main flowering times. The end of flowering signals the end of the growth cycle for the current year. After flowering, water only a little, just enough to keep them from wrinkling severely. Small wrinkles are usual in the winter, and the plants get very colorful in full sun. Keep them very cool. Night temperatures from 40°-50°F, or just above freezing, are suggested. In the daytime, keep the temperatures in the 50s or 60s. Warmer temperatures should be avoided.

These are low, compact, thick succulent plants and come from very arid regions. Try to give them adequate light; water only to keep them going. They will quickly become uncharacteristic if given too much water or too little light.

Smaller plants, or ones that are just potted up, will need a bit more water at any time of the year. But old, mature, flowering-size plants will need very little or nearly nothing all winter. This depends on your conditions, especially warmth. A cooler place with full sun will give you very nice coloration and better flowering next fall.

In the late fall at the end of flowering and growth, they will open their fissure, and next year's leaf pairs will start showing. These new leaves will expand and feed off the old leaves. You should keep them quite dry until the old leaves have dried away. Lithops should be very flat with the soil line during the winter. They are the tallest at flowering time, but are never more than one inch high. If too high, they are not getting enough light, and/or they are getting too much water.