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How to Care for Jade Plants



Jade can make a great houseplant, especially in a classic ceramic or terracotta pot.

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Botanical Name: *Crassula arborescens*, *Crassula ovata*

Plant Type: [Houseplant](#)

Sun Exposure: [Full Sun](#), [Part Sun](#)

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Growing Jade Plants: Lighting, Watering, Repotting, Propagation, and Pests

By [Catherine Boeckmann](#)

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Jade plants are succulent houseplants, which makes them fairly resilient. Plus, they're capable of living a long, long time with proper care. See how to care for your jade plant as well as how to easily propagate a jade plant from a spare leaf.

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About Jade Plants

With their thick, woody stems and oval-shaped leaves, jade plants have a miniature, tree-like appearance that makes them very appealing for decorative houseplants. They live for a very long time, often passed down from generation to generation, and reach heights of 3 feet or more when grown indoors.

watered during the growing season (spring, summer) and drier during the dormant season (fall, winter) is essential. However, even during the growing season, the soil should be allowed to dry out thoroughly between waterings, as jade is very susceptible to rot.

Jade plants may be grown outdoors as landscape plants in areas with a mild, dry climate year-round (typically Zone 10 and warmer). They are very susceptible to cold damage, so in locations where temperatures get to freezing or below, it's best to grow jade in containers and take them indoors when it gets below 50°F (10°C).

[Jade plants also make fantastic bonsai!](#)

[Learn all about the process.](#)

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PLANTING

How to Plant Jade Plants

- Choose a wide and sturdy pot with a moderate depth, as jade plants tend to grow top-heavy and fall over.
- Use soil that will drain thoroughly, as excessive moisture may promote fungal diseases like root rot. An all-purpose potting mix will work, though you will want to mix in additional perlite to improve drainage. A 2:1 ratio of potting mix to perlite is great. Alternatively, use a premade succulent or cacti potting mix.
- After planting a jade plant, don't water it right away. Waiting anywhere from several days to a week before watering



Older jade plants may develop a thick, scaly trunk, giving them their classic tree-like appearance.

Photo by trambler58/Shutterstock.

How to Start a Jade Plant from a Leaf or Stem-Cutting

As a succulent, jade plants are very easy to start from single leaves or cuttings. A stem cutting is a great method when a branch of your jade plant happens to fall off. Just put that cutting in the soil, and you have a new baby plant or a gift plant! If you have time, however, you can propagate from a single leaf!

Propagate before the weather gets cool. And make sure you start with a well-established plant.

1. For a stem cutting, ensure you're using clean clippers or scissors to take your cutting, which must be 3 to 4 inches long. If you're using a leaf, it must be the complete leaf, that includes the small pointy bit that breaks off from the stem.
2. Once you have your leaf or cutting, allow it to sit for several days in a warm place; a callous will form over the cut area, helping to prevent rot and encourage rooting.
3. Gather your pot and a well-draining potting mix. Use soil that is slightly moist but not wet.
4. Lay the leaf on top of the soil horizontally, covering the cut end with some of the soil. If you have a stem cutting, place it upright in the soil (prop it up with a few small rocks or toothpicks if it won't stand on its own).
5. Place the pot in a warm place with bright, indirect light. **Do not water.**
6. After a week or two, the leaf or cutting will start sending out roots. Give

longer, testing it (gently!) every few days.

7. Once the plant seems to be firmly rooted, water it deeply and carefully. Use something like a turkey baster to gently water the plant without disturbing the roots too much. Make sure that you don't just get the surface layer of the soil wet, as you want to encourage the roots to grow downward for water, not towards the surface.
8. Let the soil dry out between waterings and keep the plant out of intense direct sunlight until it is well established.

GROWING

How to Care for Jade Plants

Lighting

- Jade plants should receive at least 6 hours of bright light each day. Young plants should be kept in bright, indirect sunlight; large, well-established

- Kitchens and offices with south-facing windows are typically great spots with just enough light, as are western-facing windows.
- Jade plants that are kept in low light can become leggy and top-heavy, making them susceptible to damage if they fall over, or become unable to support their own branches!

Temperature

- Jade plants grow best at room temperature (65° to 75°F / 18° to 24°C), but prefer slightly cooler temperatures at night and in the winter (down to 55°F / 13°C).
 - **Note:** Jade plants are not frost tolerant, so if you keep yours outdoors during the summer, be sure to bring it inside once temperatures fall to around 50°F (10°C) in autumn.
- During winter, move jade plants away from cold windows and keep them out of drafty areas. If exposed to cold temps, jade plants may drop

- Watering jade plants correctly is very important! Improper watering is the number one issue that most people experience with their jade plants.
 - **When the plant is actively growing in the spring and summer**, it will require more water than at other times of the year. Water jade plants deeply (meaning that the soil gets sufficiently moistened throughout—not just at the surface), then wait until the soil has mostly dried out before you water it again. This means that you could end up watering it once a week or once a month—it depends entirely on how quickly the soil dries out in the environment where you keep your plant.
 - **The plant may go dormant in the fall and winter**, causing it to slow or pause growth entirely. During this time, it won't need much water. Water it less often than in the spring and summer, allowing the soil to dry out fully between water-

two waterings throughout their entire dormancy period.

- Try to avoid splashing water on the leaves while watering, as this can expose them to rot in a humid environment.
- Jade plants can be sensitive to salts in tap water, so water with filtered or distilled water if your tap water is not ideal.
- If the plant starts to drop its leaves, if the leaves look shriveled, or if brown spots appear on the leaves, it indicates that the plant needs MORE water.
- If leaves become squishy and waterlogged, the plant is getting TOO MUCH water.

Read more about [How to Water Plants for Healthy Growth](#).

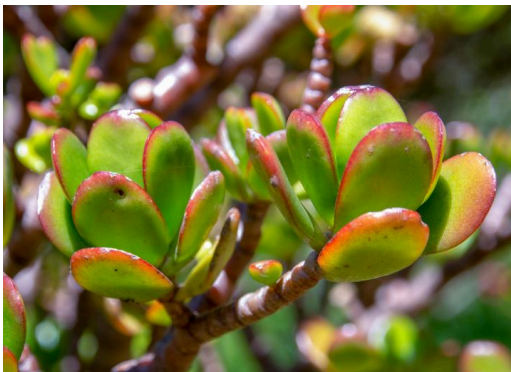
Fertilizing

- Jade plants don't require high levels of nutrients and should be fed sparingly. Use a diluted mix of a standard liquid houseplant fertilizer or a fertil-

If you prefer using your own fertilizer, you can use our [Organic Homemade Plant Fertilizer](#).

Repotting Jade Plants

- Jade plants don't mind being root-bound in a small pot. In fact, keeping them root-bound will keep the jade smaller and more manageable.
- Repot young jade plants once every 2 to 3 years to encourage growth. With older jade, repot once every 4 to 5 years or as necessary.
- Transplant in the early spring, just before the growing season begins.
- After repotting, don't water the plant for a week or so. Wait at least a month before fertilizing so as not to burn fresh roots accidentally.



Some varieties of jade may develop

Types

There are many types of jade plants available—from the standard, green-leafed jade to a number of variegated varieties. Here are a few exciting jades to keep an eye out for:

- **'Hummel's Sunset'** has beautiful yellow- and red-tipped leaves.
- **'Tricolor'** has leaves variegated with white and cream.
- **'ET's Fingers'** has tubular leaves with red tips. An oddity!

HARVESTING

- New jade plants can easily be started from the leaves of mature plants. See the **Planting** section (above) for more info.

GARDENING PRODUCTS



PESTS/DISEASES

- **Mealybugs or scale** may hide under stems and leaves. To remove the pests, use a spray bottle of water or wipe the insects off gently with a bit of rubbing alcohol on a paper towel or cotton swab. Repeated applications will be necessary to remove the pests' offspring. If the plant is too heavily infested, it may be better to take a clean cutting from it and start anew.
- **Powdery mildew** can be a problem but is fairly uncommon indoors.
- **Root rot** is caused by excessive mois-

- **Shriveled or wrinkled leaves** are signs of a thirsty plant in need of more frequent or deeper waterings.
- **Waterlogged and squishy leaves** indicate that the plant is getting too much water.
- **Leaf drop** is a symptom of watering issues, too.

WIT AND WISDOM

- To persuade a jade plant to flower, keep it root-bound in a small pot and hold back water. Cooler temperatures in the winter promote blooming, too.
- Jade plants are one of several plants with the nickname “money plant” and are seen by some as a sign of good luck and prosperity.
- Due to their long lifespans and resiliency, jade plants make fantastic gifts that can last a lifetime and be passed from generation to generation.
- Susan Mahr of the [University of Wisconsin–Madison](#) tells us, “The Khoi and other Africans used the roots for

HOUSEPLANT GUIDES**ABOUT THE AUTHOR****Catherine Boeckmann**

Catherine Boeckmann loves nature, stargazing, and gardening so it's not surprising that she and The Old Farmer's Almanac found each other. She leads digital content for the Almanac website, and is also a certified master gardener in the state of Indiana. [Read More from Catherine Boeckmann](#)

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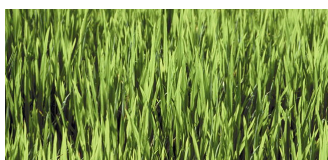
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COMMENTS

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My jade plant ha the thin leaves which plump up once full of water. It started as a sprout in a Dixie cup. Now 8 years old 3 feet high. The trunk& stems are not green like should be but brown and splinter, plus leaves falling out Is it in shock or is it something else 🤔

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REPLY

Paula Montgomery (not verified) 7 months 1 week ago

My Jade I have had for 4 years. It seems healthy but it has not sprouted out any limbs. It is tall and straight. I read online a couple of years ago to pinch off a leaf during the winter, but no results. I have it in the same pot in a southwest window. What do I need to do?

REPLY

Jake (not verified) 7 months 3 weeks ago

I have two jade plants, one is about five years old, and the other is only a year or two. I never knew they were supposed to look like small

horizontal plane; to be perfectly honest, I think they look rather ugly. Is it a characteristic of the particular variety, or am I doing something wrong? (I've had others in the past, and they've all done the exact same thing.)

REPLY

Linda Seymour (not verified) 1 year 4 months ago

I started my jade plant from leaves of my friend's plant which her cats destroyed. It was growing quite well, but now there are many small gnat like bugs all over the soil. Could these be coming from the potting soil I used? If not, what could be their source and how can I get rid of them?

REPLY

Pat Youngs (not verified) 1 year 9 months ago

My Jade is 43 years old. I have never pruned or changed the soil. The Jade is huge and the growth is now coming from the bottom limbs.

alive and beautiful. I don't want to do anything that would kill it. Any suggestions?

REPLY

The Editors 1 year 9 months ago

Your jade plant sounds like it is healthy and happy. Even though it is in compacted soil, the signs of growth suggest that it is doing fine and that no changes are urgently needed at this point.

There is always a risk in pruning or repotting, as it stresses the plant, and pruning can sometimes introduce disease, etc. On the other hand, these tasks can also help to promote plant health in the long run.

Usually, mature jade plants can be repotted every 4 to 6 years. It might be good to get your plant into a more aerated, loose soil mix (see article for soil types that jade plants like), but

Jade plants like to be root-bound, so if you decide to repot, perhaps you might select a pot only about 1 inch or so deeper and wider than before. (Jade plants have shallow roots.) Wait until a week or so after repotting before watering the plant.

In general, jade plants tolerate pruning fairly well. They are commonly pruned if they are growing top-heavy; it sounds, though, as yours has plenty of lower limbs to keep it balanced. Pruning can also be done to keep it a smaller size, to remove damaged areas, create a pleasing shape, reduce legginess, promote growth, etc. The best time to prune is in spring or early summer, when the plant is actively growing. Do not remove more than 1/3 of the plant, and in most cases, avoid cutting the main trunk(s)—focus on the side branches/leaves. Make the pruning cuts just above a node.

to allow the plant to recover from stress in between.

Hope this helps!

REPLY

PJ Hargrove-Bonfield (not verified) 2 years

ago

My Jade plant was covered in blooms. Should I dead head now that they are dying back?

REPLY

The Editors 2 years ago

Hi, PJ. Once your jade plant's flowers fade, you can certainly commence deadheading.

REPLY

Aimee (not verified) 2 years 8 months ago

At what point is a jade plant not considered

move it out of the screened patio to the open patio so it gets more light -- but it would be a lot of direct afternoon sunlight. Is it too new for that still?

REPLY

The Editors 2 years 8 months ago

That is plenty old enough to handle more light! New plants that are less than a few months old or those that have been freshly planted should be kept out of direct sun for a bit so that their roots can settle in properly.

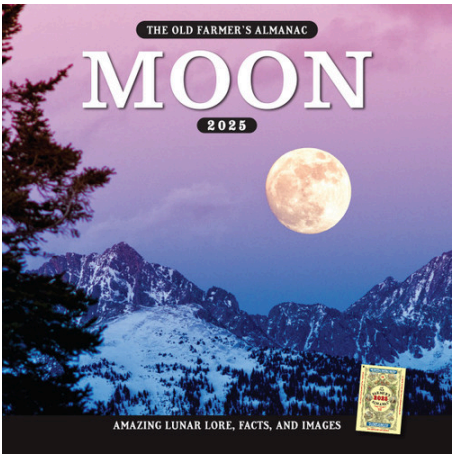
Your plant should be ready to move into more light, but you will want to do the move slowly. Going from shade to full sun will shock a plant and cause it to lose its leaves or worse. Perhaps move it onto the sunnier patio during a string of overcast days, or keep it on that patio for only a few hours a day, gradually increasing the amount over 10 days or so.

Also be sure to make sure to adjust your watering habits if the plant is getting more sun; the soil may dry out faster. But always test the soil before watering!

REPLY

MORE COMMENTS

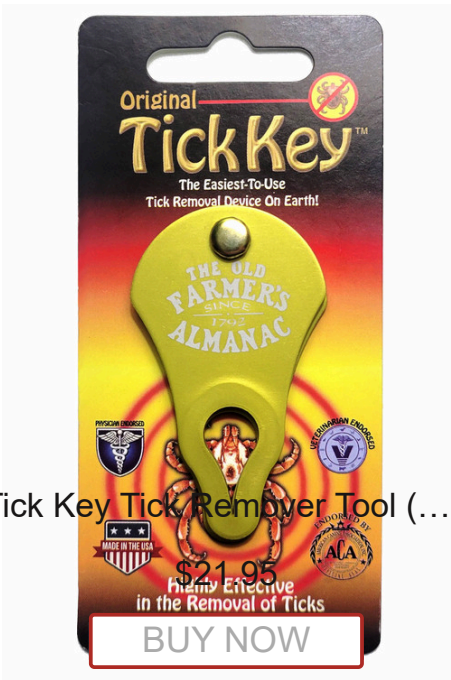
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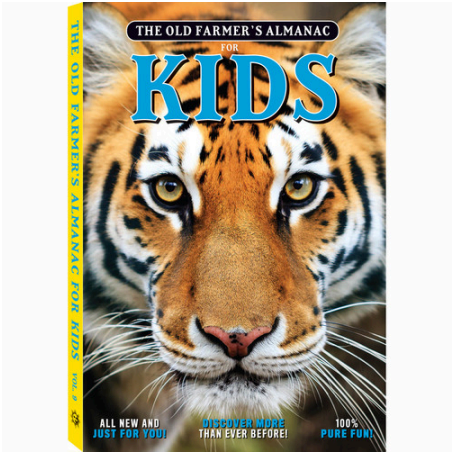
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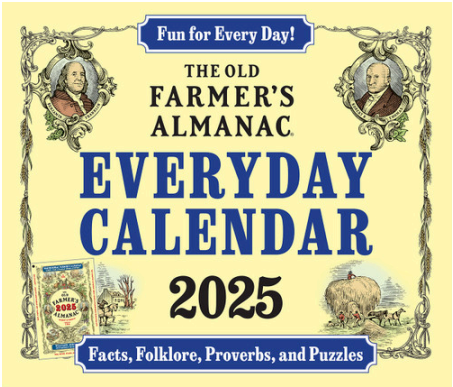
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