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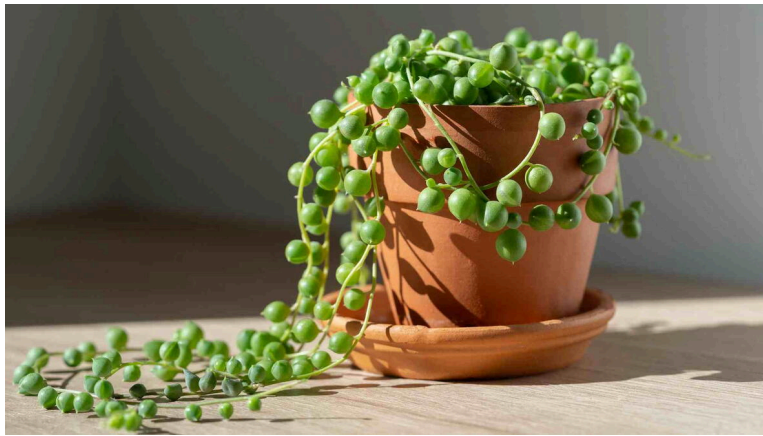
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How to Care for String of Pearls Plant



The eye-catching and graceful String of Pearls houseplant (*Senecio rowleyanus*).

Photo Credit: DimaBerlin

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Growing, Caring, and Propagating the String of Pearls Houseplant

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A true *treasure* of a plant, string of pearls are unique and easy-care succulents with graceful, trailing stems and rounded, bead-like leaves that look like glistening green pearls strung on a string. Perfect for adding vertical interest to home decors, string of pearls are relatively easy to keep, and they always impress when their long stems are displayed in hanging baskets or pots placed on a high shelf. If you're ready to add these *gems* to your collection, this guide will *dive into* the basics of how to grow, maintain, and propagate string of pearl plants!

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About String of

Also known as string of beads, string of peas, or rosary vines, string of pearls belong to the Asteraceae or daisy family and they come from the [Cape of South Africa](#). In the wild, string of pearl plants grow as ground covers on dry, rocky soil, and their spreading stems root when they touch the earth and form dense mats over time.

As houseplants, string of pearls are usually displayed in [hanging baskets indoors](#) or pots, but they can be grown in wide trays if you want to mimic their natural habitat!



A small string of pearls houseplant!
Credit: DinaBerlin

When well-maintained, string of pearls grow quickly, and their stems can grow up to 15 inches per year and stretch over 3 feet long! These plants also occasionally

namon-like scent. Unfortunately, blooming is rare indoors, but string of pearls still demand attention with their distinct, pea-shaped leaves that come in green or variegated shades.

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Like other succulents, string of pearls use their fleshy leaves to hold onto moisture and resist drought, and they don't need to be watered often. In fact, string of pearl plants can quickly develop root rot in soggy soil and die away. To avoid issues, grow these plants in bright light, water sparingly, and keep them away from your “furry friends”—they're [toxic to pets](#)!

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PLANTING

Although string of pearls grow rapidly, these succulents have shallow roots that don't need to be repotted often. For best results, repot string of pearl plants when you bring them home and about every 2 to 3 years after that. When repotting, choose a container that's just one or two sizes larger than your existing pot and make sure your growing container has drainage holes in the base!

- Spring is the best time for repotting, but houseplants can be repotted in any season as long as they're not in bloom.
- Be sure to handle string of pearl plants with care when repotting. Their stems and leaves are fragile!
- Choose a well-draining potting mix intended for cacti and succulents or

3 parts potting soil and 1 part coarse sand.

- To repot your plant, add several inches of potting soil to the base of your new growing container, locate your string of pearls in the pot so that it's at the same depth it was growing in its old container, fill in any empty space with more potting soil, firm the soil around your plant's roots, and water well to help your string of pearls settle in.
- If you break any stems while repotting, use the broken stems to create new plants with soil propagation!

GROWING



*Flower blooming on a String of pearls
(Senecio rowleyanus) Credit: IrinaK*

String of pearls are short-lived plants that

longer by propagating new plants from stem cuttings and providing your plants with the right balance of light and water.

Light

Like other succulents, string of pearls need at least 6 to 8 hours of bright light per day to grow, but direct sun can sometimes damage their leaves. Keeping these plants in west- or south-facing windows that receive bright sun in the morning and filtered light in the afternoon is ideal. They do well under grow lights too.

Water

String of pearls are highly susceptible to root rot and overwatering them is the surest way to do damage. To avoid overwatering, keep these plants in well-draining pots and only water them about once every 2 to 3 weeks or when the top 1 to 2 inches of soil feels dry. If possible, water your plants from the bottom to keep their leaves dry, dump out plant saucers after

Fertilizer

Although string of pearls have a fast growth rate, they don't need much fertilizer. Just provide them with a monthly dose of organic, liquid fertilizer diluted to half strength in spring and summer.

Humidity

One of the best things about string of pearl plants is that they don't need a humidifier, and they're perfectly content with standard indoor temperature and humidity levels. In fact, these plants don't like high humidity and they shouldn't be misted!

Seasonal Care

String of pearls can be placed outdoors in filtered light in summer, but they should be brought back inside before temperatures dip below 50°F. These plants need more attention during the active growing season and they should be watered spar-

with sterilized pruners and trim overgrown stems, if needed, to keep your plants more compact.

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Although string of pearls rarely flower indoors, you may be able to trigger blooming by placing your plants in a frost-free and well-lit spot that stays at around 40°F during the winter. When the weather warms in spring, provide your plants with a dose of fertilizer, and they may just bloom!



Senecio rowleyanus variegata, aka variegated string of pearls, propagated in soil. Credit: Creative by Nature

Propagation

String of pearls only live a few years before they die away. But you can keep your plants growing by propagating their stems to create new string of pearl plants. This is also the best way to salvage plants with root rot!

- Take 4 to 5 inch long stem cuttings, ideally in spring or summer.
- Make your cuts at a leaf node, carefully remove the lower leaves on the stem cuttings, and allow the cuttings to dry for a day or two.
- Plant the cut stem ends about 1 inch deep in pots filled with damp, well-draining potting mix. Keep the leaves above the soil line.
- Move your cuttings into bright, indirect light and wait a few days to start watering. Then, water your cuttings just enough to keep the soil damp, but not soggy, and they should root in about 3 to 4 weeks!

Types

There are variegated string of pearls for variation.



If you love the curious look of string of pearls, you're in luck. These plants are closely related to other "string plants" that look just as pretty in hanging baskets or pots!

- **String of dolphins** have a similar vibe to string of pearls, although their fleshy leaves are longer and look like dolphins in mid-jump.
- **String of bananas** are another succulent option with elongated leaves and trailing stems that stretch up to 3 feet long.

GARDENING PRODUCTS



PESTS/DISEASES

String of pearls can sometimes develop discolored or distorted leaves and other signs of stress. These issues usually result from overwatering, but they can be caused by other stressors too.

- **Pests**, like mealybugs, scale, and spider mites, may leave yellow or silver spots on plant leaves, and they're most likely to target stressed plants. These pests can be managed by adjusting your plant care regimen and treating active infestations with organic soap or neem oil sprays. If fungus gnats invade, it means your plants are overwatered!
- **Shriveled leaves** usually indicate that string of pearl plants need more water. If plants are severely water-stressed, they may drop their leaves, too. **Leaf drop** can also occur when plants get too cold.
- **Mushy or dark stems and leaves** mean that your plants are overwatered and that root rot is setting in. Reducing

propagation is the only way to fix severely rotted plants.

WIT AND WISDOM

- The scientific name *rowleyanus* is a tribute to the British botanist Gordon Douglas Rowley, who specialized in cactus and succulent plants.
- The dark band of tissue on the leaves of string of pearl plants is known as an “epidermal window.” This structure is also present in some types of haworthia and other succulents, and it allows light to penetrate *inside* the plant’s leaves. That means that photosynthesis in these plants occurs on the outside *and inside* of their leaves!

HOUSEPLANT GUIDES

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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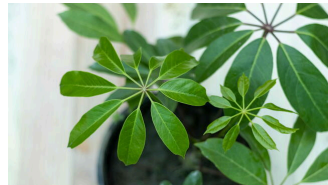
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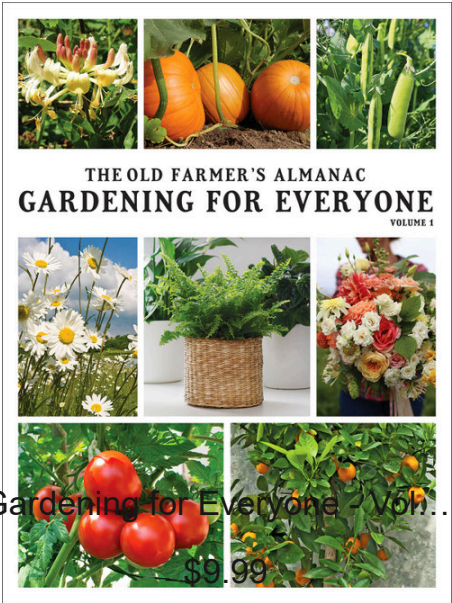
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