

As the weather warms up, planting a dish gardens is a fun way to spruce up your Tucson apartment. I like to keep a couple things in mind as I plan my garden.

1. **Use a pretty dish!** A lot of things can work but you'll have better and longer lasting results if your dish has drainage holes, or if you can at least drill some yourself.
2. **Soil!** You will want something that is well drained and aerated. Cactus potting soil works well.
 - 2.1. Your dish has holes (or you drilled them yourself). Cover the holes with a piece of coffee filter (on the inside!) so that your soil doesn't fall out.
 - 2.2. Your dish doesn't have holes. Place a layer of gravel at the bottom of your dish to collect excess watering.
3. **Choose your plants judiciously!** Small cactuses and succulents work very well. I like planting *Mammillarias*, *Echinocereus*, small *Ferocactus* as far as cactuses are concerned. For a non-spiny alternative include *Echeveria*, *Aloe*, *Sedum*, and *Dudleya* just to name a few.
4. **Don't over crowd your dish!** While they grow slowly, cactuses and succulents do get bigger over time. Plan for growth by leaving an inch or more between plants.
 - 4.1. You can forgo this somewhat and just plan to repot as the plants grow.
5. **Decorate!** Rocks and other interesting features can provide an attractive contrast between the soil and the plants. While not necessary for plant health, covering the exposed soil with small gravel provides a clean look.
6. **Water just enough!** This is perhaps the hardest part. Watering will depend on the dish you use, its size, and generally how dry the air around it is. Oh and also the kind of plants included. Make sure to look at the watering requirements for your plants. Generally, make sure the top of the soil is dry before watering. Watering interval can be anything between one week to three or four.



Sedum praealtum



Dudleya brittonii



Echeveria 'Sahara'



Aloe camaronii



Ferocactus pilosus



Mammillaria lauii



Mammillaria plumosa