

Western Horticulture Society Meeting
Sept 9, 2026

Laying the Foundation for a Resilient Garden - Succulents with Cricket Riley

- Cricket is the owner and designer of [Lush Dry Gardens](#) (landscape design firm)
- Recommended local bookstore on where to buy 'Designing the Lush Dry Garden': [Mrs. Dalloway's in Berkeley](#)
- Preview of book found [here](#)
 - What makes a lush dry garden resilient
 - The role of succulents in a dry garden
 - Connection to *Designing the Lush Dry Garden*
 - Design lessons from the Dry Garden Design Certificate Program
 - Extensive plant lists
 - 17 home gardens showing different styles

Tools

- [Hida Tool](#): recommended garden tool store in Berkeley
 - [Fishing hook remover](#) tools are GREAT for removing debris from spiky plants

What to Prune/Clean

- Succulents
 - Check out the extensive [plant highlight articles](#) written by the prolific Ruth Bancroft Garden Curator, Brian Kemble. You can read all about many of the plants highlighted in the talk, including yuccas, agaves, aloes, etc.
 - An explanation and helpful photos about [etiolation with succulents](#).
- Agaves
 - [CA Agave Species Catalog](#) by UC Agriculture and Natural Resources; link found at the end of the article.
- Cacti
- Trunking leafy succulents
 - For reference, we recommend Jeff Moore's [Soft Succulents](#) publication
- Leaves
- Flowers

Fertilization

- Fertilize during the **growing season**
- Understanding when succulents benefit from additional nutrients
- Compost and biochar as soil amendments/materials
- Before fertilizing, make sure you understand what the [NPK numbers](#) are on the bottle.
- [Urban Farmer Store](#) in Richmond has a variety of recommended fertilizers (to be used prudently!)
- [Places](#) where you can source biochar compost (soil amendment)

Pests

A. Common Succulent Pests

- Scale
- Mealybugs
- Aphids
- Agave mite
 - [Photos](#) of common agave and aloe pests
- Aloe mite

B. Management

- Identifying pest problems early
 - Learn more about IPM (integrated pest management) [here](#).
- Beneficial insects
- Sources for beneficial insects and pest-management materials
- Various recommended pest management items (make sure to read labels carefully!) : Monterey Bt, horticultural oil, 70% alcohol, neem oil

Water & Irrigation

- Understanding irrigation needs in a dry garden
- Checking and maintaining the irrigation system
- Adjusting irrigation seasonally
- Summer watering considerations
 - Agaves

- Cacti

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 - [Urban Farmer Store](#) in Richmond (now called Heritage Landscape Supply)- Recommended store for irrigation supplies

Exposure & Environmental Conditions

A. Sun

- Sun exposure
- Recognizing and addressing sun damage
- Providing sun protection
 - [30% shade cloth](#) for plants

B. Cold & Rain

- Cold damage
 - [Historical photos](#) from Ruth Bancroft Garden
- Rain-related damage
- Understanding plant hardiness
 - An excellent [resource about aloes from San Marcos Growers](#) (a now defunct nursery but their website is still very relevant and helpful)
 -
- Environmental protection

Soil

- Soil as a component of succulent health
- Creating appropriate growing conditions for dry-garden plants
- [American Soil & Stone](#)- a Richmond institution for soil amendments and mulch
- [Free Starbucks coffee grounds](#) for your garden

Types of Mulch

- Wood mulch
- Rock mulch