

# *Aeonium tabuliforme*

Often referred to as the plate plant, *A. tabuliforme* is unique in the succulent world by virtue of its stemless large flat rosette which is made up of hundreds of spatulate shaped leaves. When grown under ideal conditions the rosette can reach 300mm or more in diameter and be almost completely flat. Native to the Canary Islands, it grows on steep shady volcanic scoria cliffs where the rosettes cling to the vertical slopes.

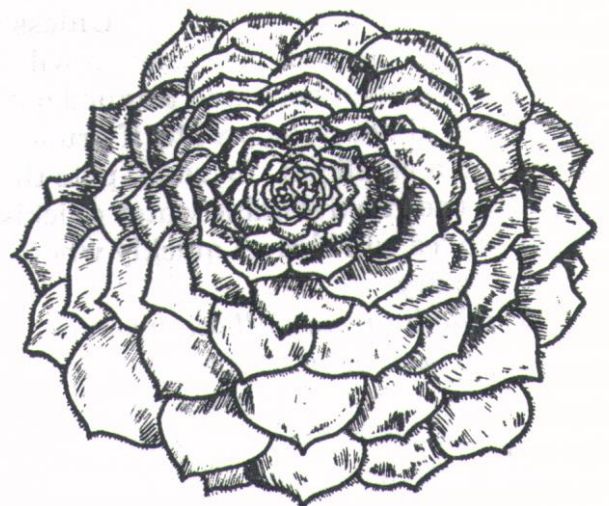
In cultivation, *A. tabuliforme* is grown in an open potting mix or outdoors in partial to moderate shade. A winter grower in habitat, it dislikes hot wet summers and will often exhibit yellowing, brown leaf edges and a tendency to dome in the middle if grown in too warm and sunny a site. As an outside specimen it can be superb but it requires a frost free environment. Here it will make most of its growth during autumn and can grow from 100mm to 300mm in a few months if conditions are to its liking.

Propagation of *A. tabuliforme* is easiest from rosettes which come from older plants of the crested version of this plant. The rosettes root quickly even at a small size. Healthy mature leaves will also produce plantlets when calloused but this method of propagation requires the removal of the over-mature leaves to get at the plump mature ones. Seed is available occasionally from overseas sources and if still fresh, will germinate well. From seedlings I have grown, I have not noticed any appreciable variation from plant to plant. If you want to maintain *A. tabuliforme* in your collection for any length of time it would be best to keep a crested version of this plant in your collection as a supply of offsets to replace older plants which flower or become damaged.

Problems associated with *Aeonium tabuliforme* revolve mainly around trying to grow large specimens in

pots. It is easy to grow it to 150mm but large perfect specimens are a challenge. When older plants are stressed they will flower from the centre of the rosette and the plant will die but, at least in southern states, this seldom happens to smaller plants, even if they are many years old. Outdoor plants will flower in the spring and the flower spike can reach 1m in height in a matter of a few weeks. The flowers are not impressive but it is interesting to watch the spike develop out of the flat rosette. Plants which do not flower will eventually become stemmed and often are lopsided and domed in shape.

Mites can damage *A. tabuliforme* during the winter. The mite infects the newest leaves only and sucks these dry, forming a ring of lighter colored leaf edges. The secret to growing show specimens of *A. tabuliforme* is to grow them quickly under cool and moist conditions and to avoid any damage to leaves since these scar easily and will disfigure the plant for the remainder of its life.



*Aeonium tabuliforme*