

# Sedum and Don't Weep: A Guide to Propagating *Sedum spathulifolium* at the SER Native Plant Nursery

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## **Introduction:**

*Sedum spathulifolium*, or broadleaf stonecrop, is a common and important native plant to the PNW that we do not currently grow or sell at the SER\_UW Native Plant Nursery, despite it being easy to grow and very attractive to customers - particularly community members and students at our Fall and Spring Plant Sales.

It is a small, perennial herb that thrives in gravelly and rocky sites and is very good for ground cover. You will often come across this species on rocky outcrops in coastal sites, dry and arid environments, or growing in between the rocks in someone's front yard rock wall. The leaves are flattened, spoon shaped, and succulent, and the flowers are a vibrant yellow. It is tolerant to sun conditions from full sun to partly shady, but it needs some direct light. This species does best in well drained or rocky sites—it can handle the amount of rain the PNW receives but if it sits in water it will rot.

There are several closely related species, including *Sedum oreganum* and *Sedum lanceolatum*, which are both native to Washington but have slightly different appearances. I will not focus on these species, but my research tells me that they can all be propagated vegetatively in the same way and require similar care.

## **How to: Vegetative Propagation**

I will focus on vegetative propagation here, but this species also can be grown from seed. You can collect seeds from the fruit (follicles). Benefits of vegetative propagation include ease, scale, and timing. If you have a plant, you can very easily take a stem cutting or leaf, place it in a new pot of soil, water it, and wait for roots to grow. This is easy! Additionally, you can take many cuttings from one mother plant, which might allow for a lot more individuals to sell. Finally, to grow this species from seed can take up to a year (including collection, stratification, etc.), but propagating vegetatively only takes a few months!

*When:* cuttings can be taken in spring, summer, or fall. Winter is the worst time because if the new roots are frozen, growth might be inhibited.

*What:* cuttings of the stem, singular leaves, or entire rosettes.

*How:* take cuttings (stem at least a couple inches), if using a blade make sure it is sterile. If taking leaves, gently twist them off of the stem. Let the cuttings callous over for 3 days so

that the cut surfaces do not rot when placed in a moist medium. Place these into a small 2-3 inch pot filled with well-draining, sandy soil with the cut edges just below the surface of the soil. Keep in a warm, dry spot.

*What do I do afterwards?* Allow the soil to dry out very thoroughly between waterings, especially when the new plants are young. This species is highly drought tolerant and will be fine if they are dry, but if conditions get too wet they will rot.

*How long do I have to wait?* Roots and plantlets will form in about one month and continue to spread quickly. In 3-6 months, they will be rooted well enough and large enough to sell, but waiting a year for a larger plant might be ideal. They will start to flower in 1-2 years in late spring, especially after being planted in the ground. You can keep separating and propagating this plant over and over again because it will continue to spread outwards.

### **Where to get Plants:**

1. A classic, Oxbow Farms, Carnation  
(<https://www.oxbow.org/native-plants/purchase-plants/>)  
Farm Stand Retail Availability *Sedum spathulifolium*: 4", \$8.00
2. T & L Nursery, Redmond  
(<https://www.tandlnursery.com/availability-FH.php?direct=o&id=p&all=o>)  
Wholesale, *Sedum spathulifolium* 'Cape Blanco'

**References:**

[https://www.wnps.org/native-plant-directory/423:sedum-spathulifolium#:~:text=Plant%20Type%3A%20Herb.,to%2020%20cm\)%20in%20height](https://www.wnps.org/native-plant-directory/423:sedum-spathulifolium#:~:text=Plant%20Type%3A%20Herb.,to%2020%20cm)%20in%20height)

<https://courses.washington.edu/esrm412/protocols/2017/SESP.pdf>

<https://mygardenlife.com/plant-library/broadleaf-stonecrop-sedum-spathulifolium>