

# Sempervivum (Hen & Chicks)



**Sempervivum** is the proper name of the plant and means “Live Forever”. In English speaking countries it is most often called “Hen and Chicks”. The plant is a popular house/container plant (and has been for over 1,000 years) but is probably best known for it’s use in Rock Gardens...which are a type of garden especially well suited to children. Parents who live in apartments could start a small garden at their church or talk to their apartment manager about a an area as small as 2’x2’ with plenty of sunlight.

**Instructions for Child Size Rock Gargen.** Mark out a two foot square of soil. If there is grass remove it and the top two inches of soil. Put the grass etc. in a Trash Bag for disposal. Spade up the soil when it is neither too wet or too dry 6-7 inches deep. Mix in one cubic foot (one bag) of Potting Soil ( Garden soil and Top soil are less expensive but in most cases *not worth the money*. You would probably be better off adding nothing. ) Mix the soil and cover it with a double thickness of plastic trash bag. Bury the edges of the plastic OR weigh them down with bricks or stones. When you are ready to plant cut small X’s just large enough to plant one plant per X. Water the plant thoroughly and fold the plastic back so that it is flat on the ground. If possible cover the entire trash bag with sand, decorative pebbles or shredded tree bark. At my first preschool every child had his own garden (12” square) and it was pretty much the highlight of the entire year.

**Another plant** that thrives in rock gardens is “Sedum”. Like sempervivum it comes in over 500 varieties, is readily available, and is easy to propagate. For a rock garden the Short or creeping varieties are probably best. Both Sedum and Sempervivum are known for getting by on very little water but at least once every ten days is the minimum.

For inner city children Sempervivum is a **near perfect plant for collecting**. It is inexpensive. You can trade them with others. It can winter over either indoors or outdoors. It is harder to kill than African Violet and most other blooming plants. It thrives on neglect and yet is attractive and entertaining.

**The Bible Lesson:** Dr. Gilbert Beers author of “Teaching Toddlers the Bible” put much stock in what he called “Pre-Evangelism”...laying foundations for future lessons. I recommend all Dr. Beers easy to read books very highly. Just having a plant named “Live Forever” could prepare your child’s brain for future learning.. Trying too hard to teach a Bible lesson before a child is ready might not be a good idea.