

Mesemb Growing Schedule

I would like to share my experience gained growing a wide range of Mesembs. Since Manchester Branch took over the North West Mesemb Show some 10 years ago now I quickly discovered, both as a grower and the show secretary, that I had a lot to learn in a very short time. I had grown mesembs for many years before this change in circumstances but I was more familiar with Lithops, which I had grown for some thirty years at that time, and some of the more easily grown and obtainable genera that were in cactus and succulent nurseries or available from seed offered by the BCSS seed list, in particular. Most of these were happy to grow in a spring, summer and into autumn schedule like my cacti. But there are many more that have a very different growing cycle due to where they grow in habitat and when they receive rainfall.

Thus it was, I set out to increase my collection and learn about the cultivation of these delightful succulents that can provide a grower with a complete 12 month cycle of plants in full growth. Some are resting completely in summer while others are in full growth. Others enjoy an autumn and spring growth cycle with a slow down in winter. Yet others have only a short growth period, usually spring into summer and then back to rest. The variation is wonderful.

As a backdrop to the sheets of growing times for mesembs I would like to stress a few points. Growing plants in what I term the north midlands of England we experience growing conditions and weather that can be different from other parts of the country. We are sheltered by the Welsh hills from the prevalent south westerly winds that can cause havoc in more exposed areas. We also have the Pennines to the east of us and they provide an effective barrier, normally, from the worst weather that the northern European continent can throw at us. But we do not experience the same amount of sunny weather which can be expected in more southerly regions or that is often found in Lincolnshire, especially in winter which helps the winter growing species. We do experience more rain than some parts of the country. However, having said that, I believe the instructions will act as an effective guide and your experiences of your conditions will help you fine tune the situation in your own greenhouse. They are a reflection of what works for me.

I hope you will try to grow some of these marvellous plants and see how enthralling they are even if they don't have spines and areoles. Experience will help you improve in getting them to perform effectively in your conditions. If at first you don't succeed try, try again.

Peter Bint

peter@bint.myzen.co.uk - if you feel you should need to ask questions.

Mesemb growing periods

Watering in December/January for winter growing plants has to be very cautious as our weather conditions and daylight hours are not conducive to plant growth.

This is offered as a guide to help you enjoy growing your Mesembs but does not claim to be definitively correct. It comes from combined research and years of experience. Though most genera are included omissions can be found.

Winter and Spring

Brownanthus	January – May
Hartmanthus	January - May
Odontophorus	December – May (possibly some during late Autumn if weather is applicable)
Psilocaulon	January – June

Spring and Summer

Aptenia	June – September
Nelia	April – August
Vanheerda	April – August (will accept water occasionally at other times as they border summer/winter rainfall zones)

Spring, Summer and Autumn

Aloinopsis	April - November (sparingly in late summer and more after that. A. orpenii + Prepodesma which receives rain in late summer in habitat.)
Bergeranthus	April – October
Cephalophyllum	April - September
Chasmatophyllum	May – October
Cylindrophyllum	March – October
Deilanthe	April - November (These are caudiciform Aloinopsis. Treat D. peersii like A. orpenii)
Delosperma	April – November
Didymaotus	May – September (needs good light)
Dracophilus	April - November (careful watering at other times)
Drosanthemum	April – December (treat like an alpine; may need a little water in winter)
Ebracteola	April – October (less in high summer)
Erepsia	April – October
Faucaria	April to November
Glottiphyllum	April – November (reduce watering in June & July)
Hereroa	April – October
Lampranthus	May – November (some may be appreciated in March/April given carefully)
Leipoldtia	May - October
Malephora	May – October
Mesembryanthemum	May - October
Mestoklema	April – October (enjoys being outdoors in spring/summer once frosts are finished)
Nananthus	April – October

Orthopterum	April – November (Considered to be Faucaria by some authorities)
Ottosonderia	May – October
Pleiospilos	May – November (P. nelii requires a little water into winter)
Psammophora	May - October
Rabiea	April – October
Rhinephyllum	April – November
Rhombophyllum	April – October
Stomatium	March – December
Schlechteranthus	May – October
Stoeberia	May – October
Tanquana	May – November (water rarely and lightly to prevent leaves splitting, open compost)
Tischleria	April – October
Titanopsis	April – December (give a midsummer rest)
Trichodiadema	March – November

Summer and Autumn

xArgyrops	June – December
Dinteranthus	June – October (start in May with misting if weather is sunny a lot)
Fenestraria	May/June – November
Frithia	May – November
Khadia	August – December (maybe into January if weather suitable)
Lapidaria	May/June – October
Lithops	June – October (mist in May if hot: L. optica and rubra need some November water)
Namibia	August – December
Schwantesia	June – November (occasional water in winter if sunny period)

Summer, Autumn and Winter

Antegibbaeum	August - March
Argyroderma	July – February (only rarely after December)
Aridaria	June – Sept & Dec – March (winter watering to be sparing on suitably sunny days)
Cerochlamys	August - February
Cheiridopsis	August – March (winter rain predominates but plants live in a variety of locations, so I water carefully through the period suggested)
Conophytum	July – March (C. khamiesbergense and C. herreanthus need water in late May and lots in summer; grow in free draining compost)
Gibbaeum	August – March (Imitaria muirii is G. nebrownii and enjoys gentle watering plus misting on suitable days)
Ihlenfeldtia	August – March (considered to be Cheiridopsis by many authorities)
Muirio-Gibbaeum	August – February
Vanzijlia	August – February

Autumn and Winter

Acrodon	September – February
Astridia	October - March
Maughaniella	October – March
Ruschianthus	October – March

** Phyllobolus includes Sphalmanthus and Dactylopsis

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Autumn (Winter) Spring

Antimima	September – May
Astridia	October – March
Bijlia	September - April
Braunsia	October – April
Cerochlamys	August - February
Dicrocaulon	October – March
Diplosoma	September – April
Energanthe	September – June
Jacobsenia	September – April
Jensenobotrya	September – April/May (Coastal plants which receive mist from sea fogs; rain less than 2")
Juttadinteria	September – December (with occasional watering to March)
Meyerophytum	August – April (sparingly from January)
Mitrophyllum	August – April (sparingly from January)
Monilaria	September – April
Namaquanthus	September – April
Oophytum	October – March (need strongest light possible and careful watering in winter)
Phyllobolus **	September – April
Sceletium	Sept – Dec & Mar – May
Vlokia	October – May (need good drainage and ventilation)

Airflow over mesembs is very useful as it prevents conditions in which Botrytis flourishes. It is advisable to avoid below zero temperatures for long periods. Plants in habitat receive much better light conditions in winter. Even though it may be their 'cool period' they will experience higher temperatures than in Britain.

All plants designated as "needing a summer rest" should still receive a little water to preserve the feeder roots so they are ready to take up moisture once full watering resumes. If night-time temperatures exceed 17/18°C plants will not open their stomata for Carbon Dioxide/Oxygen exchange which means they will rest and water uptake will not occur. Very wet soil at this time will lead to root and plant rot. Most mesembs will benefit from occasional water outside of normal growing times if the weather conditions allow the plants to accept moisture. This can be provided by spraying or a little water for the soil to take up from the bottom so the soil is slightly dampened at the base of the pot.

When a plant flowers it needs some water but if the flowers come at the end of the growing period watering will cease once the blossoms die off.

This guide has been composed with the help of Suzanne Mace, Eddy Harris, Alice Vanden Bon and Steven Hammer who have offered help verbally or in written form and they are thanked for their guidance.

At any time of the year

Carruanthus	mainly April – October (but some water at other times)
Corpuscularia	mainly spring and autumn (careful watering at other times just to support the plant)
Machairophyllum	all year (In brightest growing spot possible enjoy abundant water in free draining compost)
Marlothistella	all year (mainly summer growing but some water during late autumn/winter)
Mossia	mainly spring, summer, autumn (will accept winter watering)
Muiria	all year except when leaves turn yellow (watering should be regular but sparing; do not leave dry for more than 2 months after leaves yellow; not easy to grow as it needs maximum light in winter)
Neohenricia	mainly spring, summer, autumn watering (water often but sparingly in winter)
Oscularia	all year round (get very thirsty in late winter when forming buds)
Ruschia	all year round (put outdoors in late spring to early September)
Scopelogenia	all year (like Lampranthus in appearance; water carefully in winter and increase for the rest of the year)

Genera	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Acrodon	F	F	R	R	R	R	R1	R1	G	G	G	G
Aloinopsis (incl Deilantho)	R	R	R	F	F	F	G	G	G	G	R1	R
Antegibbaeum	G	F	F	R	R	R	R	G	G	G	G	G
Antimima	F	F	F	G	G	R	R	R	G	G	G	G
Aptenia	R	R	R	R	R	G	F	F	F	R	R	R
Argyroderma	R1	R1	R	R	R	R	G	G	G	F	F	G
xArgyrops	R	R	R	R	R	G	G	G	G	F	F	G
Aridaria	R1	R1	R1	R	R	G	G	G	G	W	W	W
Astridia	F	F	G	R	R	R	R	R	R	G	G	G
Bergeranthus	R	R	R	G	G	F	F	G	G	R	R	R
Bijlia	G	G	G	W	R	R	R	R	G	F	F	G
Braunsia	G	G	F	F	R	R	R	R	R	G	G	G
Brownanthus	G	G	F	F	F	R	R	R	R	R	R	R
Carruanthus	W	W	W	G	G	G	G	G	F	F	R	R
Cephalophyllum	R	R	R	G	G	F	F	G	G	R	R	R
Cerochlamys	F	F	R1	R	R	R	R	G	G	G	F	F
Chasmatophyllum	R	R	R	R	G	G	G	F	F	G	R	R
Cheiridopsis	F	F	F	R1	R	R	R	G	G	F	F	F
Conophytum	F	G	G	R	R	R	G	G	F	F	F	F
Cylindrophyllum	R	R	G	G	G	G	G	G	F	G	R	R
Delosperma	R	R	R	G	G	F	F	F	F	G	R	R
Dicrocaulon	G	G	F	F	F	R	R	R	G	G	G	G
Didymaotus	R	R	R	R	F	G	G	G	G	R	R	R
Dinteranthus	R	R	R	R	R	G	G	G	G	F	F	R
Diplosoma	F	F	F	F	R	R	R	R	G	G	G	G
Dracophilus *	w	w	w	G	G	G	F	F	G	G	G	W
Drosanthemum	R	R	R	F	F	G	G	G	G	G	G	R1
Ebracteola **	R	R	R	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	R	R
Enarganthe	R	R	R	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	R	R
Erepsia	R	R	R	G	G	G	F	F	F	G	R	R
Faucaria (incl. Orthopterum)	R	R	R	G	G	G	G	F	F	F	G	R
Fenestraria	R	R	R	R	R1	G	G	G	F	F	R	R
Frithia	R	R	R	R1	G	G	G	G	F	F	G	R
Gibbaeum (variable see end of list)												
Glottiphyllum	R	R	R	G	G	G	W	W	F	F	G	R
Hartmanthus	G	G	F	F	G	R	R	R	R	R	R	R
Hereroa	R	R	R	G	F	F	F	F	F	F	G	R
Ihlenfeldtia	F	F	F	R	R	R	R	G	G	G	G	G
Jacobsenia	F	F	F	G	R	R	R	R	G	G	G	G
Jensenobotrya	R1	R1	R1	R1	G	G	F	F	F	G	R1	R1
Juttadinteria	R1/F	R1/F	R1	R1	R	R	R	R	G	G	G	G
Khadia	R1	R	R	R	R	R	R	G	F	F	F	F
Lampranthus	R	R	R	R	G	F	F	F	F	F	G	R
Lapidaria	R	R	R	R	R	G	G	G	F	F	F	R
Leipoldtii	R	R	R	R	G	F	F	F	G	R	R	R
Lithops	R	R	R	R	R	G	G	F	F	F	W	R
Machairophyllum	W	W	W	G	G	G	F	F	G	G	W	W

Malephora	R	R	R	R	G	G	F	F	F	G	R	R
Marlothistella	W	WF	WF	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	W	W
Maughaniella	F	F	G	R	R	R	R	R	R	G	G	F
Mesembryanthemum	R	R	R	R	G	G	G	G	F	F	R	R
Mestoklema	R	R	R	G	G	G	F	F	F	G	R	R
Meyerophytum	W	W	W	W	R	R	R	G	G	F	F	G
Mitrophyllum	W	W	W	W	R	R	R	G	F	G	G	G
Monilaria	F	G	W	W	R	R	R	F	G	G	G	F
Mossia	W	W	W	G	F	F	G	G	G	W	W	W
Muiria	W	W	R1	W	F	F	R1	R1	W	W	W	W
Muirio-Gibbaeum	G	G	R	R	R	R	R	F	G	G	G	G
Namaquanthus	F	F	G	G	R	R	R	R	G	G	G	G
Namibia	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	G	G	G	F	F
Nananthus	R	R	R	G	G	F	F	F	F	G	R	R
Nelia	R	R	R	G	G	G	F	F	R	R	R	R
Neohenricia	W	W	W	G	GF	G	F	F	G	G	W	W
Odontophorus	F	F	F	G	G	R	W	W	R	R	R	G
Oophytum	WF	WF	WF	R	R	R	R	R	R	G	G	G
Oscularia	W	W	F	F	F	G	G	G	G	G	W	W
Ottosonderia	R	R	R	R	G	F	F	F	G	G	R	R
Phyllobolus	F	F	G	G	W	R	R	R	G	G	G	F
Pleiospilos	R	R	R	R	G	G	G	F	F	F	G	R
Psammophora	R	R	R	G	G	G	G	G	F	F	R	R
Psilocaulon	G	G	G	G	G	F	R	R	R	R	R	R
Rabiea	R	R	R	G	G	G	G	G	F	F	R	R
Rhinephyllum	R	R	R	G	G	G	G	G	G	F	F	R
Rhombophyllum	R	R	R	G	G	F	F	F	F	G	R	R
Ruschia	W	W	W	G	G	G	F	F	F	G	G	W
Ruschianthus	G	F	F	R	R	R	R	R	R	G	G	G
Sceletium	R1/F	R	G	G	G	R	R	R	G	G	G	G
Schlecteranthus	R	R	R	G	G	G	F	F	F	G	R	R
Schwantesia	R	R	R	R	R	G	G	F	F	F	G	R
Scopelogena	W	W	W	F	F	F	F	G	G	G	W	W
Stoeberia	R	R	R	R	G	G	G	F	F	F	R	R
Stomatium	R	R	R	G	G	G	F	F	F	G	W	W
Tanquana	R	R	R	R	G	G	G	G	F	F	G	R
Tischleria	R	R	R	G	G	G	G	G	F	F	R	R
Titanopsis	R	R	R	G	F	F	F	G	G	G	W	W
Trichodiadema	R	R	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	G	G	R
Vanheerdia	R1	R1	R1/F	F	G	G	G	G	R	R	R	R
Vanzijlia	W	W	R	R	R	R	R	F	F	G	W	W
Special Instructions for Gibbaeum												
heathii and similar species	W	G	F	F	G	G	R	R	R	R	R	R
velutinum and similar species	G	G	G	G	R	R	R	R	F	F	F	F
album, pubescens	F	F	G	G	G	R	R	R	R	R	G	F
chryptopodium, pilosulum	F	F	F	G	G	G	G	R	R	R	R	F

Key: G - growing period F - growing and flowering R - Resting period R1 - Resting with occasional spray

W – water sparingly

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Data provided as a guide only.