

Real Estate

Green house Sculpted grace on your window sill Maj Gen C.S. Bewli

The attractive and colourful Haworthias are mostly stemless mini succulents from South Africa, and are an excellent option for small homes, where there is a space crunch. These plants can be grown in 10 cm pots and can thrive on window-sills. A reasonably good and varied collection can be made in a limited space due to diversity in shape, colour, size and surface structure of the leaves.



These form designer rosettes of thick and fleshy leaves, which appear to be carefully sculpted. Some species have firm, tough leaves, usually dark green in colour, whereas others are soft and semi-translucent. The rosette size varies from 5 to 8 cm. Some of these plants form clumps, while others remain solitary.

In north India their growth period is during winter months from Diwali to Holi. During summer months these plants go into dormancy and tend to lose their roots and in autumn fresh growth of roots take place.

These plants need porous compost as that of cactus. The right time to re-pot is the beginning of November.

Haworthia flowers are normally white or off-white in colour and are borne on stalks, which arise from near the centre of rosette.

These plants are basically grown for their architectural form of rosettes and their decorative leaf markings. The beauty of this genus is that these plants can be successfully grown in glasshouse culture, window-sill or indoors. They can tolerate less light conditions, but in order to produce their colourful foliage, they need some filtered sunlight.

Some of the popular species are *Haworthia truncata*, *comptoniana*, *viscosa*, *attenuata*, *limifolia*, *pumila* and *coarctata*. There are many variegated hybrids and cultivars which are very much sought after.

Propagation is through offsets, leaf cuttings and by seeds.

Haworthia Comptoniana

It is an easy to grow ornamental plant and one of the most beautiful of all Haworthias. It is solitary in nature and grows up to 10 cm in diameter. The emerald colour fleshy leaves are triangular in shape and are arranged in a star shaped rosette. The beauty of the plant lies in its distinctive appearance with leaves exhibiting white veins and reddish margins with an intricate lacework. The plant grows well under light shade to bright filtered sunlight. Water freely during summer but extreme care is taken while watering during monsoon.

Haworthia truncata

It is a slow-growing and a very attractive miniature species. It does not produce a rosette, but instead produces rough thick greyish-green leaves. Upper surface of these leaves give an impression as if they have been cut from top, and thus is very easily identified. This miniature masterpiece of nature forms beautiful clumps up to 15 cm diameter and should ideally be grown in a shallow tray.

Haworthia viscosa

It is a very unique plant which is recognised by its cylindrical column of very densely packed greyish green triangular, sharp-pointed leaves. The leaves are rough to touch. It is a robust plant which offsets from the base and forms beautiful clumps reaching a height of about 20 cm. There are several forms of this species worthy of collection.



Tending tips

- Use cactus compost and re-pot every two years, preferably in November.
- During summer months over-watering will kill the plants, just spraying of some water once in a fortnight should suffice.
- Water freely during winters, but allow the compost to dry between two irrigation cycles.
- Place the plants in filtered sunlight to get colourful foliage
- Protect from direct sunlight to prevent leaf tips from drying.

— The writer is President of National Cactus and Succulent Society of India