

Ultimate Succulents, part 1:

This plant trend will add a modern twist to stylish cakes, cookies and desserts, or use with air drying clay for home decor crafts. In this master class, we will make spoon style, elongated and pointed succulents.

Chef Nicholas Lodge

Spoon Leaf Succulent

Centre: Make a floral tape bud by wrapping half width light green floral tape three times around the end of a half length 22 gauge green wire, bend a hook with pliers then wrap another five times and continue tape half way down the wire.

Mix 35g juniper coloured paste (or a no.15 size ball of air drying clay). Measure a no.6 size ball of paste, roll into a sausage and press into the larger of the two centre cavities in the Flower Pro Ultimate Succulents Mould, scraping away any excess. Brush glue on the floral tape bud and insert three-quarters into the centre. Flex the mould around the paste then shape the paste around base of floral tape bud. Remove from the mould and leave to dry.



Leaves: Place the mould onto an elevated firm surface, such as a foam pad wrapped in cling film.

Measure five of each of the following size balls of paste to make 25 leaves (your succulent will have five layers of five leaves of each size):

Small: no.5 XL: no.7
Medium: no.6 XXL: no.8 small
Large: no.7 small

Roll the paste into a carrot shape and press into the mould with your fingers and a cosmetic sponge. Create a ridge at the base about half the length of the cavity. Brush the end of a one-third length wire (28 gauge for small / medium leaves, 26 gauge for larger leaves) with

glue and insert to about a third of the length of the leaf at an angle to follow the curve. Flex the mould to remove.

Hollow the front base using the needle end (or shaft for larger leaves) of the Companion Tool on a cosmetic sponge then pinch at the base. Place into a plastic teaspoon (you will need 25 spoons per plant) and leave to dry completely.

Once dry, tape the base of each leaf 25mm down the wire using quarter width light green floral tape.

Note: You can make smaller succulents by simply omitting the larger leaves.

Brush Eucalyptus dust in the centre hollow and Ondina Rose lightly on the top edge, front and back.

Using tweezers / pliers, bend the base of the leaves at an angle. Attach the small leaves down a little from the centre with half width tape.

Tape in the medium leaves and continue until all leaf groups are added then wrap tape to the bottom of the centre wire. Brush the back of the centre and half way down the stem with Eucalyptus dust then a little Ondina Rose dust at the base of the back leaves. Open up and steam well, lightly spray with edible lacquer then close back up as desired.

Elongated Succulent

Centre: Make a floral tape bud by wrapping half width light green floral tape three times around the end of a half length 22 gauge green or white wire, bend a hook with pliers then wrap another three times and continue tape half way down the wire.

Take 17g of foliage green paste (or a no.13 size ball of air drying clay). Measure a no.6 small size ball of paste, roll into a sausage, brush glue over the floral tape bud and insert into sausage. Shape at the base and make total length 13mm (½ inch). Holding wire to support, press end of sausage into the larger centre cavity as used for spoon succulent, flex the mould around the sausage to vein, remove and smooth side. Allow to dry.



Leaves: Brush the cavity with a little vegetable fat / shortening to help stop the paste sliding in the mould. Cut 25 one-third length 28 gauge green or white wires.

Measure five no.4 size balls of paste for small leaves, dip wire into glue and insert into the ball to the end. (Your succulent will have five layers of five leaves of each size)

Stretch down to the length of cavity, make slightly pointed, flatten very slightly and press into the mould using your thumb and finger to support the wire. Pinch down the back with other thumb and finger to create a ridge half way down from the top of the leaf. Bend over the top slightly, hollow base with the needle end of the Companion Tool and push wire into a foam block to dry.

Continue with the four remaining small leaves.

For medium leaves, repeat with five no.5 size balls of paste, but when placing in the mould press in the shape using fingers and then pinch the ridge a half to two-thirds of the way down, curl the top slightly and hollow base.

Repeat as medium for large leaves but use no.6 size balls of paste and curve over your thumb instead of just the top.

For XL leaves, use no.6 large size balls of paste (this means the paste will sit one-quarter below and three-quarters above the Size Guide) and dry in crate / convoluted foam former.

For XXL leaves, use no.7 small size balls of paste, as XL.

Once all sizes are dry, tape the base of each leaf 15mm ($\frac{3}{4}$ inch) with quarter width light green floral tape.

Dust white with a flat brush on the top, front then

back and a little pale chocolate (chocolate mixed with cornflour / cornstarch) on the tip and down the vein a little. Use same colours on tip of centre.

Bend all the leaves with tweezers and assemble like the spoon succulent using quarter width light green floral tape then change to half width tape.

Dust pale chocolate around the base of the succulent and half way down the stem, open up and finish as the spoon succulent.

Pointed Succulent

This variety has pointed leaves in rows of six. Take 25g of paste (or a no.14 size ball of air drying clay) – you can use the juniper colour (as used for the spoon leaf succulents) and add turquoise, aqua or teal. (For ADC, make two formulas of Dusty Miller green using The Measuring Mould – 2 x no.1 white, 2 x no.6 green, 2 x no.7 dark green, 2 x no.10 blue.)

Centre: Take a half length 22 gauge green or white wire, cover with half width light green floral tape and make a 5mm ($\frac{3}{16}$ inch) closed hook on the end of the wire.

Measure a no.5 small size ball of paste, roll into a sausage and press into the small centre mould with three lines. Press in with your finger then gently with the ball end of the Companion Tool. Brush glue on the hook and insert. Flex around the wire and shape paste around wire, flex open the mould and mould into wire. Leave to dry.

Leaves: The first leaves will be made using the three and six lobed shapes with the small nipple in the middle .

To make the **triple leaf**, measure a no.5 small size ball of paste, press into the cavity using a Dresden tool and cosmetic sponge. Use the needle tool to remove paste above the nipple, flex mould and remove.



Place on a cosmetic sponge with a hole in the middle and work from the leaf tip down a little to create a pinched tip.

Brush glue half way up the three leaf bases and pull the centre down so the three lobes sit in between the lines on the centre.

For the small six leaf cavity, repeat as three leaf cavity using a no.6 small ball of paste.

When positioning alternate like a double daisy.

For the largest six leaf cavity, use a no. 6 large ball of paste (this means the paste will sit one-quarter below and three-quarters above the Size Guide) and attach as previous layer then hang upside down to dry.

Now we move on to create **half groups of leaves** in the three lobed cavities.

For the small three lobed shape take two no.6 large size balls of paste and press into the cavity, remove and place under a pot. Continue with second half then place together on the green firm side of a foam pad. Brush a little glue where they meet and hollow the centre with the ball end of the Companion Tool. Using the Flexi Scraper, transfer onto a cosmetic sponge with hole in the middle, drill hole through the centre with needle end of the Companion Tool, work tips and pinch slightly. Brush glue a third of the way up each leaf and attach on overlap. Hang upside down.

For the small six leaf cavity, use two no.7 small size balls of paste.

Take a 10cm (4 inch) square of aluminium foil, form into the no.3 cavity on The Measuring Mould using a large ball tool to help form the shape. Flatten out excess foil, remove from mould and make a hole in the centre using

a cookie scribe needle or bamboo skewer.

Slide the former down upside down onto the succulent and turn over. Use a large paper clip to support or place onto a drying rack, curve the outer row of leaves out, curling down and leave to dry.

Note: This can be left at this stage or adding the small or small and large wired leaves.

Wired leaves: Make six of each size. For the smallest wired leaves, take five no.6 large (one-quarter below and three-quarters above the Size Guide), roll into a sausage and press into the cavity using a cosmetic sponge or wedge.

Create a ridge on bottom half of the leaf, dip wire into glue and insert at a slight angle upwards, flex and remove from the mould. Pinch and hollow the base using the shaft of the Companion Tool, pinch tip like a taco and dry curved over in a crate / convoluted foam to dry.

Make large leaves as small but using six no.7 small balls of paste.

Once dry, tape the base of the wired leaves using quarter width light green floral tape 25mm (1 inch) down wire.

Dust all over the centre and wired leaves using a 1:1 mix of white pearl and cornflour / cornstarch. Then with a 1:3 mix of deep purple and/ cornflour / cornstarch.

On wired leaves dust into the three main lines on the end half of the leaves, then light purple in a stripe down tip of the last two layers of centre, then a little dusted from outside to centre to give a highlight of light purple.

Dust Eucalyptus at the base of the succulent and half way down the stem. Open up and steam (for ADC spray with unscented hairspray). Once dry rearrange leaves as desired.