



Preparing your plants

After selecting the right plant for the right spot. Take it out of its pot and carefully wash all the soil off its roots. With a knife, chopstick or screwdriver push the grit aside to create a hole and gently push the roots down. Firmly tap more mix around the roots to anchor it well. Sprinkle some coarser grit around under the cushion. This will stop the smaller grit washing away. Give the whole garden a gentle spray with water and watch it grow. The idea is that the roots will reach down to the base and yet the cushion or top of the plant is out of the soil. Just as they would grow in an alpine scree or high altitude environment.

Suitable plants

Large gardens

Small conifers, saxifrage, armeria, dianthus, primroses, gentians, succulents, phlox will all love the environment. Have a variety of taller proportional plants and some spreading ones to give interest.

Container gardens

Small gentians, saxifrage, dianthus, lewisia, small cacti, succulents-choose species that won't spread aggressively and smother other plants.

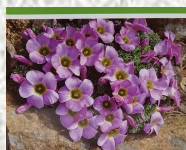
Maintenance

Some plants will naturally love your garden and grow vigorously while others will succumb. Weeds shouldn't be too much of a problem but you may get some plants seeding down successfully. So regular checks will be needed to keep everything in balance.

Some useful websites

<https://www.thehypertufagardener.com/crevice-garden/>
<https://www.highcountrygardens.com/gardening/rock-gardening-creating-a-crevice-garden>
<https://boulderhg.com/12653-2/>

The UK Alpine Garden Society also publish a very good book
 You pay: £9.95 (Members pay: £6.50)



UK Alpine Garden Society



New Zealand
Alpine Garden
Society

Creating a mini crevice garden

What is a crevice garden?

Many plants love a harsh environment. A crevice garden tries to re-create the scree and rocky alpine site that these plants love. Think no soil, extreme heat and cold, very little water and very good drainage.

There are five main things to think about:

1. Choosing the right container or position in your garden
2. Preparation
3. Suitable plants
4. Growing conditions
5. Maintenance

Crevice gardens can be large scale projects in your garden or they can be much smaller. Anyone can make one to the size they would like. A lot of factors need to be considered.

What container or garden space is available?

What rocks and materials are handy?

Orientation, shade, sun and choosing the right plants is very important.



Large crevice garden



Mini crevice garden

Choosing the right scale for you

This depends on your available space. If you have a large area in a garden then that will allow you to create a realistic and balanced crevice garden. Most of them tend to be narrow and long in shape, following any contours you may have. This makes them easier to maintain and weed. Some are part of a bigger rock area and others are built in their own unique space. Paths help making access easier in larger gardens.



Top
Very large garden with paths and extensive planting.

Above
Smaller but part of a larger garden. Able to be weeded and cared for.

Top right
Small project as part of a large garden

Right
Hypertufa container



Getting started

Prepare the site. I will separate the larger garden from containers as they are treated differently.

The rocks you use should be slabs of slate, flagstone or similar, earthenware tiles or even thin concrete left over from paths would be suitable. The main criteria is that they can be stood vertically close together to create 'crevices'.

Have plenty of good drainage material, sand and 5mm chip mixed is great and a topping of a coarser 5-8mm chip to help keep the plant stable and free from erosion.



Large gardens

Dig out around 30cm- 50cm of soil. Begin laying your rocks by firmly pushing into the base. Put them as close together as you can. Lay them all in the one direction. You can vary the height as in nature and also create a slope looks appealing. By doing this you have little nooks for plants that love the sun and very good drainage (they will be at the top), shade for others and damper conditions at the lower end for the moisture lovers.

When you have the slabs lined up and filled in the small gaps fill all the crevices with your sand and grit mix tamping down firmly so you don't have air pockets.

Containers

Treat it much the same except you may not have as much room for a soil base. It is more important to have the grit and no soil as too much soil will invite damping off. You need to think of proportions so the slabs will be much smaller. Still try and create a slope effect rather than a hill. This will allow more options for shade, sun and moisture.

Hypertufa troughs, old concrete tubs, even smaller plastic boxes are fine as long as drainage holes are put in.



Placement of stones

The direction of laying the slate is dependent on your locality. In containers it can be more pleasing visually to lay the slate diagonally across the container than perpendicularly.

Some like to also lay their slate on a slight angle to look realistic.

Growing conditions

Full sun and orientation to North with a good water supply will be essential and maintain good drainage.

