

How Do You Take Care of A Desert Rose Seedling

So you've got your desert rose babies curling their bodies out of the shells. The fun, and challenges, don't stop there. How do we go from here to taking care of a desert rose seedling? Let's see how together.

Overheating Adenium Seedlings

Scorching sun can 'steam' your seedlings, especially if the seedlings are less than 10 days old. You can recognize this by looking at their body color, a bit like this one right here:

[https://files.zenyrgarden.com/Images/Adenium%20Desert%20Rose%20Blog/Post%20\(21\)/overheated-baby-adenium.jpg](https://files.zenyrgarden.com/Images/Adenium%20Desert%20Rose%20Blog/Post%20(21)/overheated-baby-adenium.jpg)

This is a sign their body color has been transformed by the heat. When you have a sniff around, there is a strong smell of cooked veggies. You can also feel the hot steam coming out of the pot.

We placed these seedlings under full sun for about 2 hours. It was not the best idea as you can see. This can also cause root rot and death of the plants. The seedlings died unfortunately. So don't be like us.

Moral of the story is no direct sunlight for very young seedlings. A bright window with less harsh indirect sunlight would probably work. We can then take our babies out for more sunlight gradually.

Overwatering Adenium Seedlings

Be very careful about the amount of water you give your seedlings. When first starting out, we watered the plants almost every day. And, in the early afternoon when temperatures were high.

Here were the results:

[https://files.zenyrgarden.com/Images/Adenium%20Desert%20Rose%20Blog/Post%20\(21\)/overwatered-adenium-leaves.jpg](https://files.zenyrgarden.com/Images/Adenium%20Desert%20Rose%20Blog/Post%20(21)/overwatered-adenium-leaves.jpg)

The plants were fat and growing well. However, the medium soon started to become like a soggy soil 'soup' and was not draining well anymore. This led to root rot and eventually the leaves started to yellow from the tip in and fall off.

Before you water the plants, check the soil condition. We use a very small fork or toothpick to see how dry/wet the soil is.

If you're growing desert roses in sand, check the color of the sand. If it's a light color, then it's dry. If it's darker and the pot feels heavier, then it's wet. If the sand grains are loose, then the medium is dry.

Try picking the pot up to feel the weight. If the soil is dry and the pot feels lightweight, you can mist the seedlings then.

A good time to water your plants is in the morning. We notice that the plants tend to evaporate a lot in the morning hours. So, misting at this time may compensate for their moisture loss.

If you want an estimate on how much water your mister is giving out, try spraying a few times on a napkin to see. We used to spray 20 mists, but now we have reduced it to 6 sprays depending on the condition of each plant. Some people bottom water their plants just to play it safe.

But what if your seedlings have already been over-watered? Come with us here, let's rescue them right now:

Rescuing An Over-watered Desert Rose Seedling

[https://files.zenyrgarden.com/Images/Adenium%20Desert%20Rose%20Blog/Post%20\(21\)/damaged-adenium-desert-rose-leaves.jpg](https://files.zenyrgarden.com/Images/Adenium%20Desert%20Rose%20Blog/Post%20(21)/damaged-adenium-desert-rose-leaves.jpg)

Here's how we tried to save one of the seedlings in the garden:

[https://files.zenyrgarden.com/Images/Adenium%20Desert%20Rose%20Blog/Post%20\(21\)/rescue-overwatered-adenium-desert-rose.jpg](https://files.zenyrgarden.com/Images/Adenium%20Desert%20Rose%20Blog/Post%20(21)/rescue-overwatered-adenium-desert-rose.jpg)

We dig four holes using a Q-tip. Then, we insert the cotton bud in to suck up the water. You can also use a napkin. Roll it up and put it in the holes. Wait for some 10 minutes. Then, take the moisture-suckers out.

It dawned on us later on that we can just add some sand to absorb the extra water (right!).

The interesting thing you'll notice is even if all the other leaves yellow & die off, one single green leaf will remain alive. One leaf is one hope for us. The chance for survival is still there. We think that one leaf is the core of the tree.

Be mindful also of:

Damaged Seedlings From Dropping

I accidentally knocked this one off its pot a while ago :(It left two scars with the skin falling off.

[https://files.zenyrgarden.com/Images/Adenium%20Desert%20Rose%20Blog/Post%20\(21\)/dropped-adenium-skin-fell-off.jpg](https://files.zenyrgarden.com/Images/Adenium%20Desert%20Rose%20Blog/Post%20(21)/dropped-adenium-skin-fell-off.jpg)

This one is the Arabicum type. It's quite strong & is a survivor. These little younger ones were not so fortunate & did not survive. They're the Noble Concubine Obesum adenium. Clumsy me.

[https://files.zenyrgarden.com/Images/Adenium%20Desert%20Rose%20Blog/Post%20\(21\)/did-not-make-it-adenium-seedlings.jpg](https://files.zenyrgarden.com/Images/Adenium%20Desert%20Rose%20Blog/Post%20(21)/did-not-make-it-adenium-seedlings.jpg)

Moral of the story is keep your seedlings somewhere with just enough height or close to the ground so these things won't happen to them. If you place them on a high surface, keep them fixed to a corner just to be safe.

After that, we'll look at:

Under-Watered / Lack of Sunlight Desert Rose Seedlings

These seedlings haven't been receiving a lot of sunlight since their birthday (Mar 16). We were sort of running out of space for all of them to get good sunlight in our rented space. The seedlings had some light from the indoor lighting. After that, they mostly stayed inside a bigger container with a lid over. This is what they look like now:

[https://files.zenyrgarden.com/Images/Adenium%20Desert%20Rose%20Blog/Post%20\(21\)/lack-of-sunlight.jpg](https://files.zenyrgarden.com/Images/Adenium%20Desert%20Rose%20Blog/Post%20(21)/lack-of-sunlight.jpg)

As you can see, their growth kind of stops there. The one with the leaves just sort of stays that way & the one that hasn't cracked out of the shell also stays where it is.

It has been almost 3 months, but surprisingly their stems are still standing tall & they are doing okay. Oh and we gave these almost no water after some point. You can tell by the lighter color of the sand.

Check out the seedling color difference compared to seedlings that have received good sunlight + indoor light. It's a pale yellowish green compared to the dark green of the other one.

[https://files.zenyrgarden.com/Images/Adenium%20Desert%20Rose%20Blog/Post%20\(21\)/lack-of-sunlight-adenium-seedlings.jpg](https://files.zenyrgarden.com/Images/Adenium%20Desert%20Rose%20Blog/Post%20(21)/lack-of-sunlight-adenium-seedlings.jpg)

[https://files.zenyrgarden.com/Images/Adenium%20Desert%20Rose%20Blog/Post%20\(21\)/lack-of-sunlight-adenium-desert-rose.jpg](https://files.zenyrgarden.com/Images/Adenium%20Desert%20Rose%20Blog/Post%20(21)/lack-of-sunlight-adenium-desert-rose.jpg)

As for watering, we have given these guys down here very little water (almost zero) for about several weeks or more. There are some that are beginning to drop their leaves off. But they overall are still hanging in there much longer than expected.

[https://files.zenyrgarden.com/Images/Adenium%20Desert%20Rose%20Blog/Post%20\(21\)/under-watered-adenium-seedlings.jpg](https://files.zenyrgarden.com/Images/Adenium%20Desert%20Rose%20Blog/Post%20(21)/under-watered-adenium-seedlings.jpg)

Some have shown signs of wrinkles on their outer layer. But the time span that they can go without water is pretty amazing.

Smaller Obesum seedlings didn't survive this water shortage. They wilted & died off unfortunately.

[https://files.zenyrgarden.com/Images/Adenium%20Desert%20Rose%20Blog/Post%20\(21\)/under-watered-adenium-obesum.jpg](https://files.zenyrgarden.com/Images/Adenium%20Desert%20Rose%20Blog/Post%20(21)/under-watered-adenium-obesum.jpg)

So what does this all mean? What we're trying to say is, when you notice that your seedlings are a bit pale yellow, you know that it may be lacking some good sunlight.

If you under-water your plants & they are still getting light, they might wilt off faster than the ones that don't get much light. It sounds common sense, but it takes a while for us to sink it in. It's easier to understand once we've experienced this one or two times.

[https://files.zenyrgarden.com/Images/Adenium%20Desert%20Rose%20Blog/Post%20\(21\)/underwatering-two-cases.jpg](https://files.zenyrgarden.com/Images/Adenium%20Desert%20Rose%20Blog/Post%20(21)/underwatering-two-cases.jpg)

Both of these are Obesum specie. The ones on the left are younger than the one on the right. Many could have guessed the younger ones (with less resources) will be weaker, but in this case it survives.

So, if you're going away for some time & don't have the time to water your seedlings, just put them somewhere dark & cool. Their sustainability rate is amazing & you can be worry-free when you return weeks later that your plants still have a chance to survive and grow up more.

In another case, when both seedlings are under-watered & get good light the results are different (the difference is the age of the plants or how much 'meat' or resources they have stacked up inside their little bodies):

[https://files.zenyrgarden.com/Images/Adenium%20Desert%20Rose%20Blog/Post%20\(21\)/underwater-both-with-light-adenium-seedlings.jpg](https://files.zenyrgarden.com/Images/Adenium%20Desert%20Rose%20Blog/Post%20(21)/underwater-both-with-light-adenium-seedlings.jpg)

Bigger seedlings around 2-3 months can survive some weeks with little water (even with some light). When you see some wrinkles on the plant body or their leaves yellowing & dropping off, it is a sign of under-watering. The younger ones didn't make it.

We guess then it's safer to go bone-dry (e.g. forgot to water them) when your seedlings are about 2-3 months old. They still can use the stuff that they've stacked up inside their bodies for some weeks. It's a bit riskier to go no-water with younger seedlings (less than 1 month old). Especially with species that have smaller stems like Obesum.

This is the kind of indoor lighting we're having (just to save a bit of electricity compared to the many pre-installed ones). The renter before us was a fashion store owner, so she really went big on lighting.

[https://files.zenyrgarden.com/Images/Adenium%20Desert%20Rose%20Blog/Post%20\(21\)/indoor-lighting-led.jpg](https://files.zenyrgarden.com/Images/Adenium%20Desert%20Rose%20Blog/Post%20(21)/indoor-lighting-led.jpg)

It's a little bit too bright when you look at it directly (*eyes squinting*). But the overall brightness is good. They're not made specifically as grow lights. This is the light the adenium seedlings are getting a share of in the house. We're glad they are doing well.

[https://files.zenyrgarden.com/Images/Adenium%20Desert%20Rose%20Blog/Post%20\(21\)/shining-light.jpg](https://files.zenyrgarden.com/Images/Adenium%20Desert%20Rose%20Blog/Post%20(21)/shining-light.jpg)

In testing: putting some pale adenium out under this light to see if they can actually grow more.

Results:

[https://files.zenyrgarden.com/Images/Adenium%20Desert%20Rose%20Blog/Post%20\(21\)/result-of-pale-adenium-under-led-light.jpg](https://files.zenyrgarden.com/Images/Adenium%20Desert%20Rose%20Blog/Post%20(21)/result-of-pale-adenium-under-led-light.jpg)

As you can see, this little guy did not even crack out of his shell but got knocked out. From this little experience, we think it's better to introduce light gradually for the seedlings that have not been receiving much light for some time—not too abruptly for too soon.

One Final Tip: Labels!

While making this post, we accidentally mixed up 3 adenium seedlings in pots. Now we have no clue what they are until the babies bloom. So don't be like us, the type of people that think 'Oh, of course I'm gonna remember which is which'. Labeling takes little time & you can recognize which is which immediately. Good luck & have a ton of fun playing with your adenium seedlings!

To Fertilize or Not to Fertilize

These little ones Adenium Obesum got some cow manure in their mix when first started from seeds. They grow up really fast & chubby. This pic was taken when they were about 1-2 weeks old.

[https://files.zenyrgarden.com/Images/Adenium%20Desert%20Rose%20Blog/Post%20\(21\)/adenium-seedlings-with-fertilizer.jpg](https://files.zenyrgarden.com/Images/Adenium%20Desert%20Rose%20Blog/Post%20(21)/adenium-seedlings-with-fertilizer.jpg)

Some other views:

[https://files.zenyrgarden.com/Images/Adenium%20Desert%20Rose%20Blog/Post%20\(21\)/adenium-seedlings-with-fertilizer-different-views.jpg](https://files.zenyrgarden.com/Images/Adenium%20Desert%20Rose%20Blog/Post%20(21)/adenium-seedlings-with-fertilizer-different-views.jpg)

These ones down here get water only. Their bodies grow quite thinner. This was when they were 1 month old. All of them are the same specie Adenium Arabic um.

[https://files.zenyrgarden.com/Images/Adenium%20Desert%20Rose%20Blog/Post%20\(21\)/desert-rose-in-coco-peat-and-sand.jpg](https://files.zenyrgarden.com/Images/Adenium%20Desert%20Rose%20Blog/Post%20(21)/desert-rose-in-coco-peat-and-sand.jpg)

Fertilizing is okay to get your adenium seedlings a good start in life. Just make sure you don't go overboard or it might burn the young plants.

Too much chemical fertilizer too soon might weaken the babies' growing defense system. In some growers' experience, when they grow bigger they won't react too well with more feed that we put in. Some people call this unresponsiveness.

In contrast, for babies that get fed water mostly, when we plant them in more nutritious soil (with fertilizer), they react pretty well & boom up their sizes steadily. Some wait until the seedlings are quite established, about 3 months old, and then they ramp up the fert amount.

In Summary

To take good care of your adenium seedlings:

- Don't over-heat
- Don't over-water
- Don't knock them off
- Label them before you forget
- Less light = less water
- Fertilize bit by bit