Houseleeks (Hen and chicks, liveforever)

Sempervivum tectorum



Height: Up to 5cm

Spread: 20 cm as they multiply

Suitable for: Dry, open welldrained, sunny position with minimal soil cover necessary; walls, rockeries, containers.

Summary: You may choose from the three varieties below — see the individual pages for prices and ordering:

Red houseleek – *Sempervivum tectorum 'Rubin'*
A bright red coloured rosette

Red tipped houseleek – *Sempervivum tectorum 'Calcareum'*
A green rosette with bold red tips to each leaf

Spider web houseleek – *Sempervivum tectorum 'Arachnoides'*
A pale green houseleek covered in an attractive web of fine silvery hairs

More information:

Sempervivum are the most frost resistant of succulents, making them popular as a garden plants. They grow best in dry, sunny conditions and will not tolerate soggy roots especially over the winter months. They thrive on neglect and will grow in minimal soil conditions like cracks and crevices in walls, and as part of a living roof with just a few cm of soil cover to anchor in.

Shallow containers make an ideal way to grow your houseleeks, especially well draining terracotta, concrete pots and old sinks. A layer of grit over the compost surface will help prevent the lower leaves from rotting on contact with damp soil, and also enhance the houseleeks by showing off their shape.

Sempervivums are native to a mountainous band across Southern Europe, the Middle East and North Africa stretching around the Mediterranean. Their thick fleshy leaves allow them to store water and thrive in sunny, stony and rocky habitats. Traditionally when planted on roofs they are believed to ward off fire and lightening strikes, the Anglo-Saxon word *leac* means plant – so literally a plant grown on the house!

Their herbal uses are detailed by the famous herbalist Culpepper, and the juice from the leaves is said to be useful to stop diarrhoea, and also treat burns and insect bites in a similar way to aloe vera.