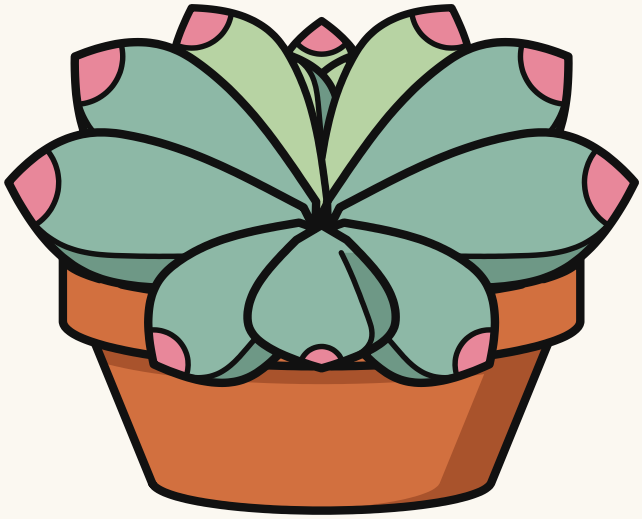
How to Draw a Succulent

11 easy steps for beginners



What you'll need

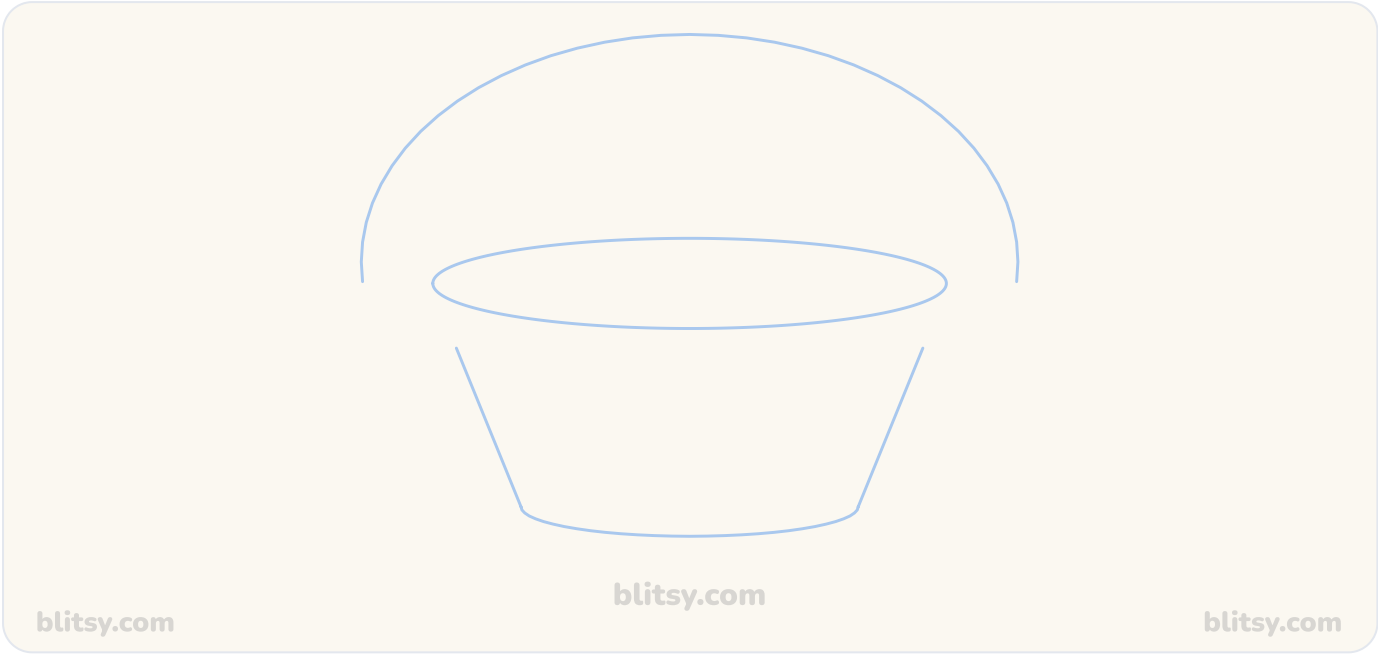
- A pencil
- An eraser
- A black marker
- Colored pencils
- White paper

How to use this guide

New lines for each step are shown in **blue**; lines you already drew are gray. Draw lightly first, then ink and erase near the end.

Read the full tutorial online →

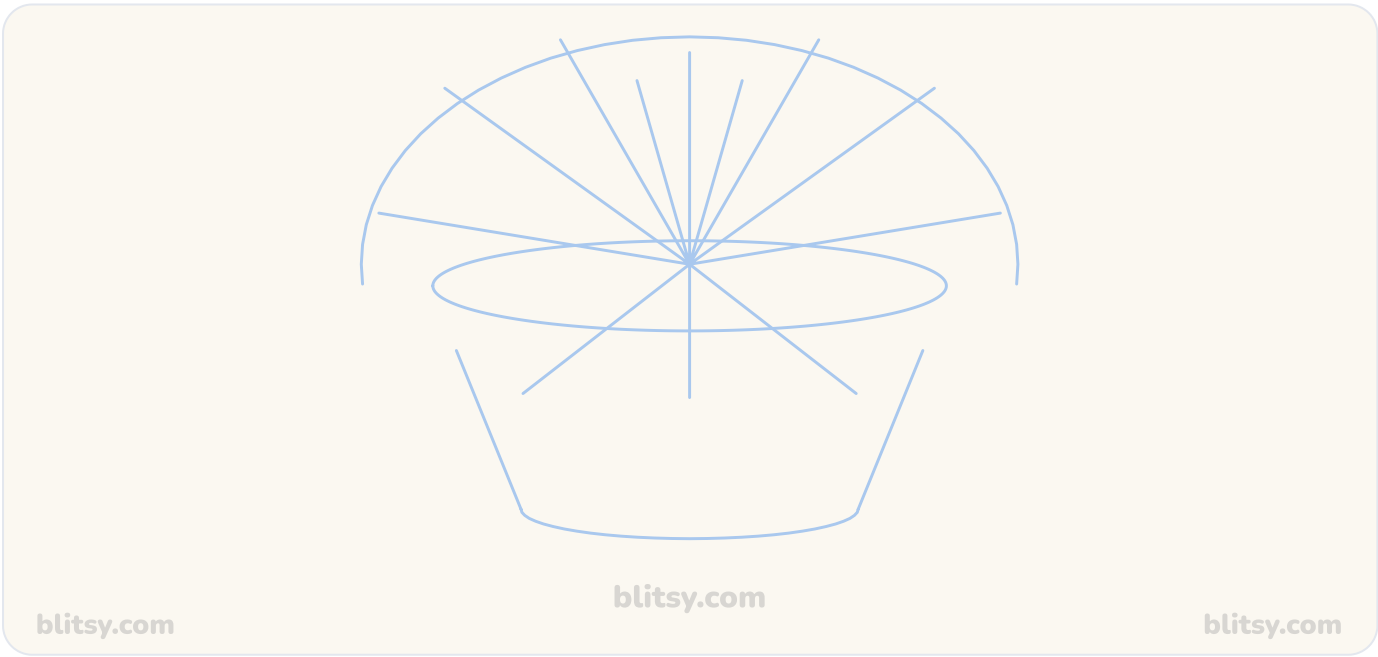
STEP 1 Sketch the pot and a wide fan



Start low on the page with a flat oval for the top of the pot. Below it, draw two lines that slant inward and join them with a shallow curve; that's the clay pot, wider at the top than the bottom. Then draw a big dome over everything, a little wider than the oval. The leaves will fill that dome.

💡 **Tip:** Leave at least a thumb's width of paper above the dome so the top leaves have somewhere to go.

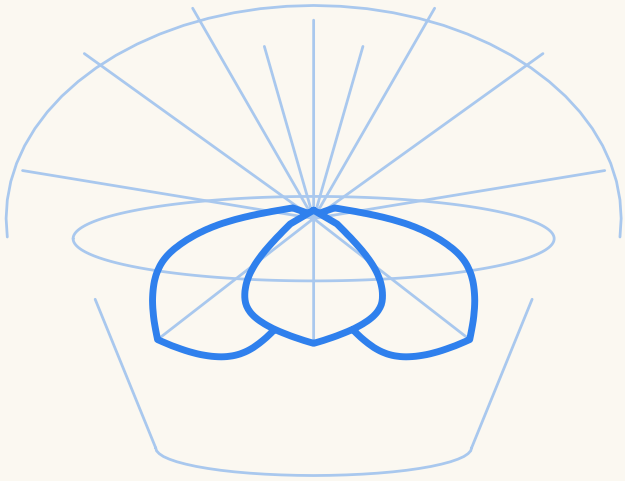
STEP 2 Add a line for every leaf



Pick a point in the middle of the oval, a little above its center. From there, draw straight lines out to the dome like the spokes of a wheel: almost flat ones on the left and right, steeper ones in between, and a few pointing down over the front of the pot. Each line marks where one leaf will point.

💡 **Tip:** Keep the spokes even on both sides. A lopsided set of lines gives you a plant that leans.

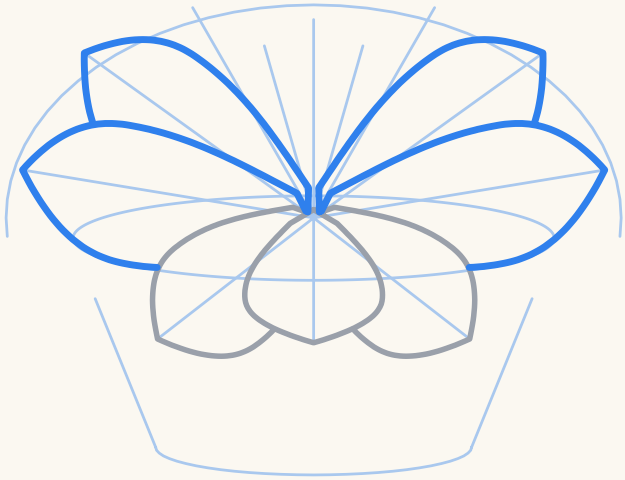
STEP 3 Draw the three front leaves



Front leaves come first, because they cover the others. Draw one rounded leaf hanging straight down from the center point, then one on each side tilting down toward the rim. Each leaf is narrow where it starts, swells out like a spoon and ends in a small point. I let these three overlap the rim; that's what makes the plant look like it is spilling out of its pot.

💡 **Tip:** Make the middle front leaf a bit shorter and rounder than its neighbors, since it points toward you.

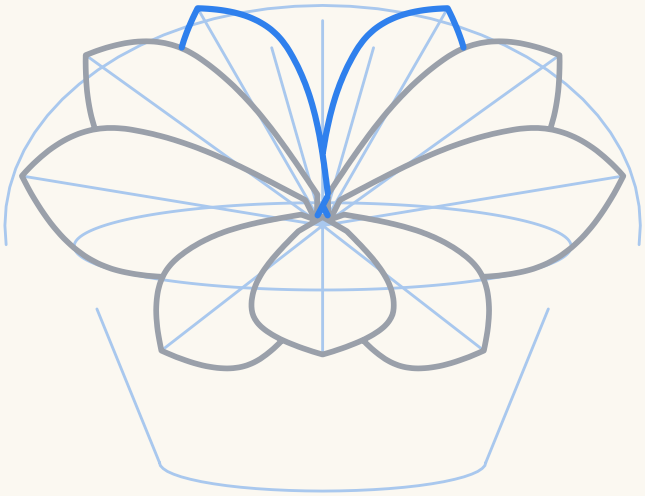
STEP 4 Add the wide outer leaves



Now the biggest leaves. Follow the flattest spokes and draw a long leaf out to each side, then a second pair angled up at about 45 degrees. Where a new leaf reaches a front leaf, stop the line there instead of drawing through it. Those leaves are behind, so part of them stays hidden.

💡 **Tip:** Curve the outer tips slightly upward. Echeveria leaves cup toward the sky; drooping tips make the plant look thirsty.

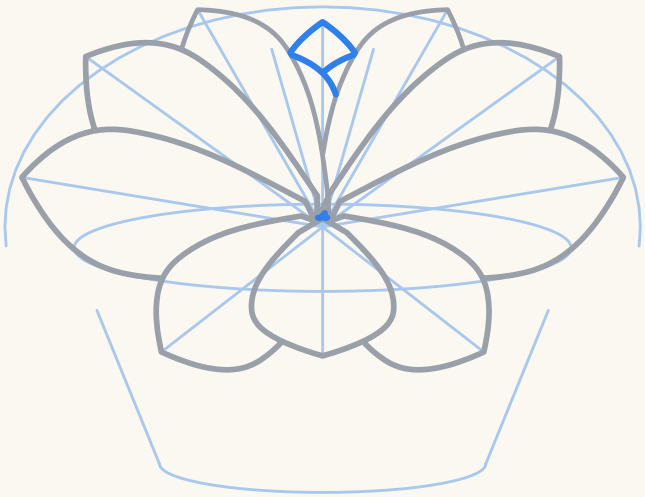
STEP 5 Fit in the middle ring



Two more leaves go in the gaps between the upper outer pair and the top of the dome. They're shorter than the outer leaves and stand more upright. Most beginners make every leaf the same size here, and the plant ends up looking like a fan. Shrinking each ring a little as you go inward is what turns it into a rosette.

💡 **Tip:** Compare each new leaf with the one below it. Roughly four fifths of its length looks right.

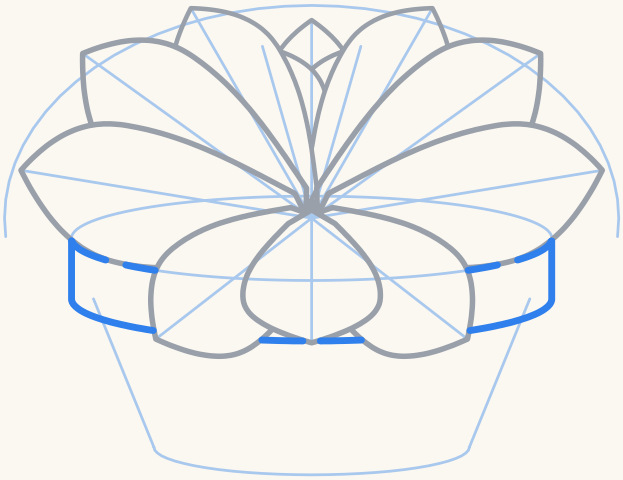
STEP 6 Tuck in the small center leaves



At the very top, add the youngest leaves: two small ones leaning apart and a tiny pointed bud peeking out between them. Only their tips show, because the larger leaves hide their lower parts. Keep them small. If the center gets big, the whole succulent looks like an artichoke.

💡 **Tip:** A tiny upside-down V between the two small leaves is enough for the bud. No need for detail there.

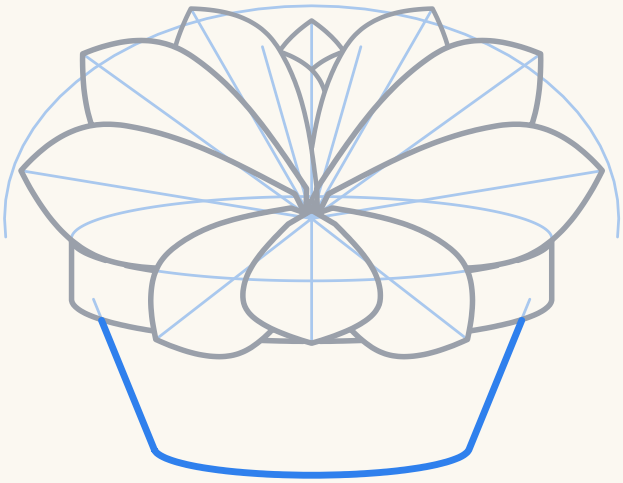
STEP 7 Draw the rim of the pot



Clay pots have a thick lip at the top. Go over the visible parts of the oval, then draw a matching curve a short distance below it and connect the two with tiny upright lines at the sides. You'll only see bits of the rim between the leaves, and that's fine. I stop every rim line wherever a leaf crosses it.

💡 **Tip:** Keep the band about a quarter of the pot's height. Thin rims make the pot look like a cup.

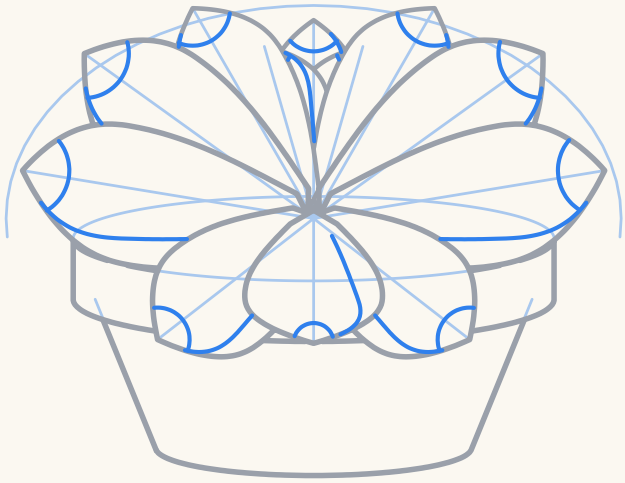
STEP 8 Shape the tapered pot body



Under the rim, trace your slanted guide lines down to the base and finish with the gentle bottom curve. The pot narrows toward the bottom, which keeps it from looking like a bucket. Check that it's a little narrower than the spread of the leaves; a slightly small pot makes the plant look healthy and full.

💡 **Tip:** Bend the base of the pot downward, not up. A smile shape at the base means you're looking at it from the front.

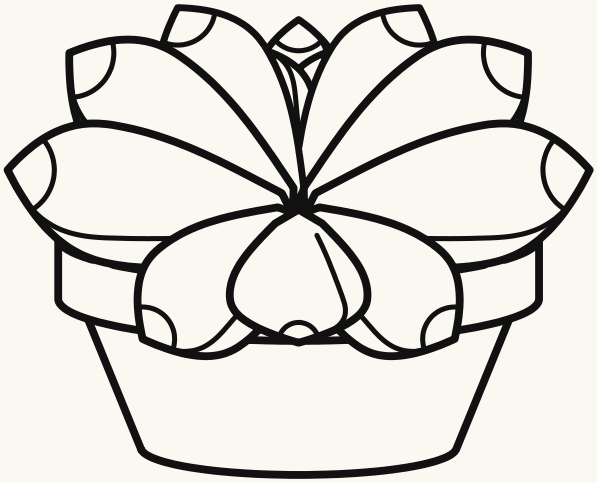
STEP 9 Add leaf creases and pink tips



Echeveria leaves are thick, and a single curved line along the lower edge of each one shows that. Start the line partway along the leaf and let it meet the edge near the tip. Then draw a small curve across every leaf tip to mark the pink area. Honestly, these little caps are what people recognize first.

💡 **Tip:** Put the crease on the same side of each leaf (the lower side), so the light seems to come from one direction.

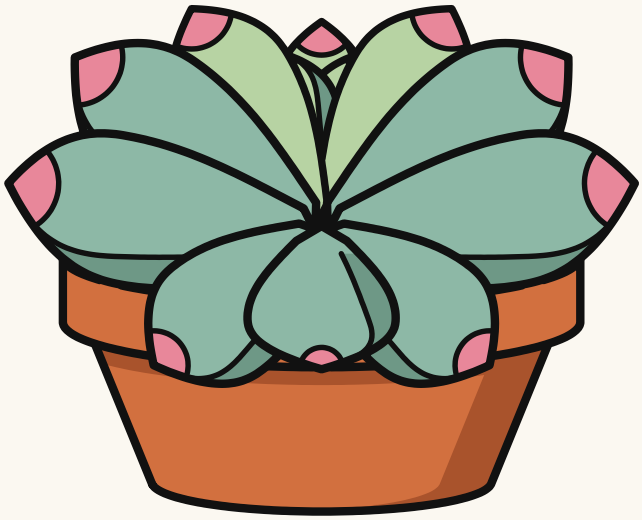
STEP 10 Ink the lines and erase the guides



Trace your keeper lines with the black marker: the leaves, the creases, the tip curves, the rim and the pot. A thicker line on the outside edges and a thinner one on the creases gives the drawing depth. Let the ink dry for a minute, then erase the dome, the spokes and the pot guides.

💡 **Tip:** Ink the front leaves first. If your hand smudges anything, it'll be the parts you have not inked yet.

STEP 11 Color your succulent



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Color the outer and front leaves sage green and the inner ones a lighter green. Fill the narrow strips under each crease with a darker green so the leaves look plump. Add pink to every tip. For the pot, I use orange brown with a reddish brown down its right side and in the shadow just under the rim, plus a lighter orange on the top of the lip.

💡 **Tip:** Blend the pink gently into the green with light strokes. Real tips fade rather than stop at a hard line.