

Air Plants

(Tillandsia)

Air plants, so called because they require no soil, comprise a fascinating and diverse genus within the bromeliad family. Most are epiphytes, meaning that they grow clinging to trees and other structures in their environment, rather than from root systems in the ground. Because they have no need for a pot of soil, Tillandsias lend themselves to a broad range of applications. Try nesting them on a clump of sphagnum in a terrarium, mounting them on a unique piece of wood or bark, or simply hanging them with wire.

Tips for success:

- **Provide bright, indirect light.** In nature, Tillandsias are found beneath the tree canopy, where sunlight is somewhat filtered. Place your air plants near a window that faces south, east, or west.
- **Keep them warm!** Tillandsias perform best in locations where temperatures remain above 60°F. They will tolerate slightly cooler conditions, but not freezes.
- **Moisten them several times each week.** One way to water your air plants is to mist them. However, to occasionally soak the whole plant by dunking it in a container of clean, unsoftened water so that all of its surfaces are moist.
- **Regular fertilizing.** Choose a plant food containing more nitrogen (N) than phosphorous (P) or potassium (K), such as Citrus-Tone or Miracid, and follow packaging instructions for application rate and frequency.