

How to Grow & Care for Air Plants

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Tillandsia, also known as air plants, are unique in that they thrive and grow without any soil. There are over 600 types of air plants. They are also relatively easy-grow plants! Air plants are a type of bromeliads that get the water and nutrients they need through their specialized leaves. Roots of air plants are only used for attaching themselves to rocks, trees, shrubs, and the ground in their native environment. Air plants are native to the southern United States, Mexico, Central America, and South America. They are warm-weather loving and can thrive on some neglect. Many grow with strap-shape or slender triangle-shape leaves, and some also have attractive funnel-shape flowers.

Growing Air Plants

Even though air plants are easy to care for, here are a few tips to ensure success:

- Constant air circulation is important to keeping your plant happy. The plant should be in an open area with good air circulation as well.
- Air plants require regular moisture. When growing indoors and the air is dry, you will need to submerge the plant in water about once a week. After soaking, shake off the excess water. Regular misting works well too.
- Air plants do not want to sit in water at any time and avoid having water sit in the inner part of their leaves. If they become too dry you will notice the ends becoming brittle and the leaves curling inward.
- Fertilize monthly in spring and summer using a low-nitrogen liquid fertilizer mixed at only one-quarter strength. A fertilizer for orchids works well.
- Although they love warm weather, most air plants need protection from full sun. Outdoors keep them in moist, partial shade. Indoors in bright, filtered light is best, but not direct sun especially if in a glass container.
- Don't let an air plant sit somewhere that's colder than 45 degrees; it will die at those temperatures.

How to Use Air Plants

Because they do not require soil, air plants can be used in many different ways. Air plants can be used alone in a small pot with rocks, attached to a piece of driftwood or coral, and almost any other place you can think of! Just keep in mind that they do need to be misted and soaked so make sure the plants can be easily removed or soaked in place.