

Growing Tillandsia (Air Plants)



Tillandsia, often referred to as air plants, are fascinating members of the bromeliad family known for their unique ability to thrive without soil. These low-maintenance plants have captured the hearts of plant enthusiasts worldwide with their exotic appearance and minimal care requirements. However, despite their resilient nature, it's essential to recognize that most Tillandsia species are sensitive to cold temperatures and are best suited for indoor environments. In this guide, we will explore the care and maintenance of Tillandsia as houseplants, ensuring their health and vitality in your home or office.

Light: Tillandsia thrive in bright, indirect light. Place them near a window where they can receive plenty of filtered sunlight. Avoid placing them in direct sunlight for extended periods as this can cause their leaves to burn.

Watering: Air plants absorb moisture through their leaves rather than roots. Watering once per week is usually sufficient, but your plant will tell you if it needs more water – withered or shriveled leaves and brown leaf tips let you know they're thirsty. Rainwater (or water from a pond or birdbath) is best for tillandsia; spring water is a good second choice. Never let water sit in the core of the plant – this will cause rot and ultimately death. There are two primary methods for watering Tillandsia: soaking and misting. Note that some like *Tectorum* prefer misting.

Soaking: Submerge your Tillandsia in room temperature water for about 20-30 minutes once a week. After soaking, gently shake off any excess water, then turn upside down and allow them to dry completely before placing them back in their display.

Misting: Alternatively, you can mist your Tillandsia 2-3 times a week using a spray bottle filled with room temperature water. Ensure that the plant's leaves are thoroughly moistened but not saturated. Misting is especially beneficial in drier environments or during warmer weather when Tillandsia may require more frequent hydration.

Whichever method you choose, be sure to provide enough water to thoroughly hydrate the plant, but avoid leaving it waterlogged, as this can lead to rot. Adjust your watering frequency based on environmental factors such as humidity levels and air circulation in your home.

Air Circulation: Proper air circulation is essential for Tillandsia to thrive. Ensure that there is good air flow around your plants by placing them in an area with adequate ventilation. Avoid placing them in enclosed containers for extended periods as this can lead to rotting.

Temperature: Tillandsia prefer temperatures between 50°F to 90°F. Keep them away from drafts and extreme temperature fluctuations. They can tolerate slightly cooler temperatures for short periods but prolonged exposure to cold can damage them.

Fertilizing: Although air plants can survive without fertilization, you can give them a boost by using a bromeliad or air plant fertilizer diluted to half strength. Apply the fertilizer by misting or soaking the plant once a month during the growing season (spring and summer).

Grooming: Remove any dead or dried leaves from your Tillandsia to promote healthy growth and prevent the spread of pests or disease. Use clean, sharp scissors to trim away any damaged or browned foliage.

Three Shovels Farm
500 Hummingbird Rd. St. Matthews, SC 29135
ThreeShovelsFarm.com

Growers of fine perennials including Daylilies, Japanese Iris, and Louisiana Iris