Tillandsia Care

Tillandsias are easy to grow epiphytes (a plant that grows non-parasitically on another plant) and need no soil because water and nutrients are absorbed through the leaves. Roots are simply used as anchors on their hosts. Tillandsias are great in terrariums, hanging glass globes or attached to wood planks! They are great, unique and easy to care for plants that are also great conversation starters. Have fun choosing one that fits your personality!



Watering: They do need water!

Tillandsias are living plants so they need water just like anything else. The way to water *Tillandsia* is what sets them apart from other plants. As a general rule, *Tillandsia* is to be misted (with a spray bottle) once a day. Here in Colorado, though, we are too dry to get away with just misting. In addition to misting, *Tillandsia* should be soaked in water once a week. You want them to be able to be dry within four hours so they do not rot. Once every three-four weeks they can be submerged for several hours. If your air plant is not growing, it could be because it is not getting enough water.

Note: Never use distilled water; it is too pure and will pull nutrients from the plant tissue!

If confused about whether or not to water, pull at an outside leaf. If it comes off easily it doesn't need water, if it's tough to pull off it needs watering. NOTE: Don't do this too often or you won't have much of a plant left.

Fertilization:

*Tillandsia*s are very susceptible to over fertilization. Using the wrong kind of fertilizer may kill your plant. Use a quality water soluble fertilizer (Fertilome® 20-20-20) at ¼ the strength recommended on the label, and use it only once a month. Another of Country Fair's favorite brand is Growmore®, which has a fertilizer specifically for *Tillandsia*.

(N) Nitrogen - should be in the form of ammonium or nitrate NOT urea (Urea needs the bacteria in soil to break it down, and you have no soil with Tillandsia).

(P) Phosphorus - an excess is not harmful and helps combat an excess of Nitrogen.

(K) Potassium - in large amounts - excess not harmful.

Minimal quantities, under 0.05%, of copper, boron and zinc are okay. Most don't say, but choose an acidic fertilizer by choice.

Light and Air:

Bright indirect light is most preferred. *Tillandsia* can sit in a window if it is north facing. Direct sun will typically be too much for them so steer clear of that. They like moving air by windows, doors or screened in porches but should not be placed under an AC/heat vent. Optimum temperature is 50-90°F with a 10° drop at night.

Reviving a neglected plant:

If there is any green left on your plant, do not throw it away. Submerge it in water for up to 12 hours, and another 4 hours 2-3 days later. Get the plant back on a routine watering schedule and it should green back up.

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