

Air Plant Care

Air plants, or *Tillandsia*, are low-maintenance and pet-safe—perfect for anyone looking for a unique yet forgiving houseplant that does not require much attention. They are members of the Pineapple or Bromeliad family—a group of mostly epiphytes, which are non-parasitic plants that grow on other plants or structures such as trees, nurse logs, or rocks. Air plants absorb water and nutrients through their foliage, while their roots simply act as an anchor to secure them in place!



SUNLIGHT

- **Provide bright, indirect light**—at least 12 hours daily.
- **Window placement:**
 - » Place directly in north-facing windows.
 - » Place further from east, west, or south-facing windows.
 - » Most air plants can handle direct morning sunlight, but anything stronger may cause burnt foliage tips.
- **Fluorescent light** will not damage air plants.



WATER

- **Fully submerge plants** in room temperature water—avoid distilled or softened water.
- **After watering, lightly shake off** and drip dry plants upside-down so excess water can drain out—sitting water between foliage can cause rotting.
- **Allow to thoroughly dry** before returning to display.
- **Watering frequency** depends on plant origin—simulating natural habitat will ensure health. Use foliage as guide:
 - » **Thin, green foliage:** From humid, tropical/subtropical environment—needs weekly soakings for 10–20 minutes; also benefits from spritzing throughout week.
 - » **Thick foliage or fuzzy, silver foliage:** From dryer air environments—only needs short soak in bowl of water once per week, or briefly run under faucet until wet.



FERTILIZER

- **Fertilize once or twice monthly** March–September.
- **Feed with** 2-1-2 ratio fertilizer or regular houseplant fertilizer (non-urea) diluted to ¼ strength.
- **Assorted nutrients** can also be provided by soaking in rainwater, pondwater, or aquarium water.
- **House dust** has even been known to provide nutrients!



TEMPERATURE

- **Thrive in indoor conditions;** species hardy down to 50°F.
- **Plants will benefit from fresh, moving air**—crack open a window on a warm Spring or Fall day!



REPRODUCTION

- **Small plantlets will form** around the base of the plant before, during, or after flowering.
- **Each air plant will form a flower** at the peak of its life cycle, then begin to die.
- **Plantlets can either be** separated from the parent or left to grow in its place.



TROUBLESHOOTING

- **Pests and diseases are rare** for air plants—most issues are from overwatering or underwatering:
 - » **Signs of underwatering:** Foliage is dry, browning at the tips, or rolling inward slightly. To fix, soak more often, soak for longer periods, or mist between soaks.
 - » **Signs of overwatering** (or not thoroughly dried): Darkened color near base of plant or feel soft/soggy and beginning to rot—overwatering is often fatal.
- **Avoid contact with copper**—it is toxic to air plants!



DISPLAY

- **Air plants can be displayed in many ways:**
 - » Aeriums
 - » Ceramic dishes
 - » Wall planters
 - » Baskets
 - » Driftwood
 - » Seashells
 - » Seed pods